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A
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
WILL of GOD
BY THE
LIGHT of NATURE,
IN
Eight DISCOURSES,
By Thomas Cooke of Crainville
WITH
An INTRODUCTION,
SHEWING THE
Necessity of enquiring after TRUTH,
AND AN
Examination into the Foundation of ERROR:

To which is prefixed

A LETTER to the Archbishop of CANTERBURY
concerning Persecution for Religion and Freedom of De-
bate, proving Liberty to be the Support of Truth, and the
natural Property of Mankind.

Omnes trahimur et ducimur ad Cognitionis et Scientiæ Cupiditatem; in qua excellere pulchrum putamus; labi autem, errare, nescire, decipi, et malum et turpe ducimus: in hoc Genere, et naturali et honesto, duo Vitia vitanda sunt; unum, ne incognita pro cognitis habeamus, his temere assentiamus; quod Vitium effugere qui volet, omnes autem velle debent, adhibebit, ad considerandas Res, et Tempus et Diligentiam: alterum est Vitium, quod quidam nimis magnum Studium, multamque Operam, in Res obscuras atque difficiles conferunt, easdemque non necessarias. Cic. de Off. Lib. 1.

L O N D O N :

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Rev. J. C. ...

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
ANTHONY
Earl of SHAFTESBURY.

My LORD,

THE following Discourses are
addressed to your Lordship
as to a Person who delights in
the Exercise of those Virtues of
Benevolence which I have endea-
voured to recommend as the
Foundation of true Religion and
the Fountain of Happyness. Your
great, your illustrious, Father left
you the rich, but perishable, Goods
of Fortune, the noble, but frail, Ti-
tles with which you are cloathed;
but he likewise left you the Posses-
sion

iv *The DEDICATION.*

sion of a more valuable, and more glorious, Inheritance, the Fruits of Wisdom and unfading Virtue; and well have you approved yourself the Heir of both: you have convinced the Public of your Attachment to them: the Smiles of Princes, the Pomp of Courts, and other Lures of Ambition, beckon you in vain, while those unerring Guides are always near you.

Your Father, my Lord, while living, was a Lustre to our Nobility: he was highly respected by all Men for his Virtues, and is now admired, beloved, and revered, by all who are born to taste, for the inestimable Legacy which he has bequeathed to Mankind: he has done more for the Advancement of Truth, and polite Literature, than any of the Moderns; and, as great a Veneration as I have for the Antients, I know none preferable to the *Earl of Shaftesbury* as a fine and useful Writer: he pleases and cherishes like the Sun, and like the

the

The DEDICATION. v

the Sun is too dazling for the Approach of weakly Eyes. Such a Lineage is greater than the proud unprofitable Descent of Kings. Kings may be so by Birth, and be no more than Kings; but

Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis.

To this Felicity of Parentage your Lordship has another Happyness, which is the Lot of few, a Wife nobly born and as nobly minded; whose Taste and Understanding render her as much the Object of our Admiration as her Virtues do of our Respect; and, if we were to judge from the *Countess of Shaftesbury*, we should conclude that the Beauty of the Casket is an Indication of the Treasure within. Give me Leave, my Lord, on this Occasion, to use the Words, with a small Alteration, of one of her Ladyship's most favourite Authors:

So father'd, and so wiv'd,

a

your

vi *The DEDICATION.*

your Lordship has in them the Boasts of their Age and Country; and one you may justly number among the Rewards of your Virtue: to her and to your own great Worth I dedicate the following Pages; and, as they are intended to promote Truth and fair Enquiry, I doubt not but they will be the more grateful to your Lordship from,

My LORD,

With an earnest Respect,

Your LORDSHIP'S

much obliged,

November,

1741.

and most obedient, Servant.

T H E

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A
L E T T E R
T O T H E

Archbishop of CANTERBURY

Concerning Persecution for Religion,
and Freedom of Debate. *

My LORD,

THE Subject of this Discourse is of
as great Importance as any in The-
ology; and I could not possibly think
of any Person to whom I can ad-
dress it with so much Propriety as to your
Grace. Your great Abilitys and Erudition,
as a Divine, and your exemplary good Life,
give you a just Title to the fairest Commen-
dations which we can bestow; but I apply
more particularly to you than to another, be-
cause your high Station, to which your Merits
have raised you, makes you the immediate Ob-
ject to which we should appeal in Subjects of
this Nature.

B

I

* This Letter was writ to the late Dr. Wake.

I have conversed, my Lord, with almost all Degrees of People, from some of the first of our Nobility, among the Laity, to the Peasant, and from the most eminent of our Prelates, among the Clergy, to some of the lowest Teachers in the several Churches of Christ; and I have observed that those among them who are distinguished for their superior Understanding, and the Virtues of Humanity, or for the latter only, agree in the Necessity of Freedom of Debate in Matters of Religion; and what your Grace's Sentiments are on the same Subject abundantly appear in your Writings, to your own Honour, and to the Honour of Religion, especially in the honest Means which you have proposed for the Conversion of Hereticks. *

I have the Happyness, my Lord, to read the Gospels in their original Purity, I mean that original Purity in which they are delivered down to us, and, thro an early and constant Application, to be more conversant, tho a Layman, with the Writings of Divines than I conceive most of our Clergy to be. If I set out on these Foundations with an honest Heart, I hope I shall not incur the Imputation of Vanity, by supposing I can render myself profitable in my Generation. I have but a small Share of Fame, if any; and in this I seek none; for I call the great Searcher
of

* Dr. Wake published a Tract entitled *Honest Means for the Conversion of Hereticks*.

of all Hearts to witness that the Love of Truth only moved me to this Undertaking.

I shall divide the following Treatise into three Heads.

- I. First I will prove that Persecution, in any Degree, is repugnant to the Doctrines of the Gospel, even to the express Commands of Christ, and that Freedom of Debate about Religion is not only consistent with Christianity, but recommended in the New Testament, as previously necessary before we can arrive at a Certainty of Truth.
- II. I will next produce the concurring Opinions of several of the antient Fathers of the Church, and eminent modern Divines, with what I advance.
- III. Lastly, I will demonstrate from Reason, from the Nature of Things, the Wickedness of persecuting for Religion, and the Folly and Baseness of attempting to lay any Restraint on the Minds of Men.

I. Without any farther Preparation, I will proceed to my first Head; which is to prove that Persecution, in any Degree, is repugnant to the Doctrines of the Gospel, even to the express Commands of Christ, and that Freedom of Debate about Religion is not only consistent with Christianity, but recommended in the

New Testament, *as previously necessary before we can arrive at a Certainty of Truth.*

The Duty of Forbearance is carryed to a great Height by the immediate Commands of Christ, who in his Sermon on the Mount, in the 5th Chapter of Matthew, charges his Followers not to resist the Evils which shall be offered to them. Ye have heard, says he, in the 43d, and 44th Verses, that it hath been sayed, thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy; but I say to you, Love your Enemys, bless them who curse you, do good to them which hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you: for, continues he, Verse the 46th, if ye love them which love you, what Reward, that is, what Merit, have ye? Do not even the Publicans (or Sinners, as Luke says,) the same? The Busyness of Christians, the Busyness I say, the Work at which they ought to labour, is to convince Men, by their Practice, of the Preference of their Doctrines to those of other Denominations. Gratitude for Benefits received, and Benevolence to all Men, are the constant Subjects of the Pens of heathen Sages; but who, besides the meek forgiving Jesus, has layed down the Duty of bearing contumelious Language, the Blows of the insulting Hand, and the Scourges of the persecuting Rod, without Resistance? In the 5th Chapter of Matthew, and the 39th Verse, whosoever, says he, shall smite thee on thy right Cheek, turn to him the left. This, indeed, is a severe

vere Injunction, and hard to be complied with; but Scandal, indelible Scandal, is the Portion of those Preachers, whose Duty is to propagate the pacific Laws of Christ, and who, in direct Opposition to them, lift up the Rod of Persecution against such as differ from them in their Sentiments of Religion; indelible Scandal, I say, is their Portion in this World, and a long, long, Age of Sorrow in the next, if Christ, whom they preach, was of God, unless they, in some Measure, atone for their Sins, by a timely and unfeigned Repentance; but we are to observe that no Repentance of our own can ease the Person who owes his Afflictions to our Crimes; for which Reason I entertain but slender Hope from the Doctrine of Repentance, especially such Repentance as comes when the Power of offending is over.

Christ, and his Servants Paul, Peter, James, and they whose Writings are delivered down to us, comfort their Brethren with the Expectation of their being scornfully treated, scourged, and killed, for the Sake of Jesus; in which also they are taught to glory: wonderful, and abominable, therefore, that they, who should pride themselves in being thought worthy the Flames, should be outrageous in tormenting other Men!

The Priests who persecute, in any Degree, whether to Death, to Imprisonment, or to a less Affliction, must know, if they believe those Scriptures which they teach, that they act as if they thought God insufficient to punish, or to judge: hear Paul, in the 12th Chapter of his

Epistle to the Romans and the 39th Verse, beloved, avenge not yourselves, but give Place to Wrath, meaning the Wrath of other Men, for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, sayeth the Lord.

An universal Love has Paul made the Subject of the whole thirteenth Chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, preferring it to Faith and Hope: if I speak, says he, in Verse the 1st, with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, I am but sounding Brass, and a tinkling Cymbal: and this is the same Love, Αγαπη, which his Lord, Christ Jesus, commands to be exerted towards one another: nor is it a stinted Charity which the Apostle here dwells so much on the Praise of, not a Charity confined to the pityful Doles which are bestowed on the Poor, nor a Charity limited to one peculiar People, but an universal Love to all Mankind.

Persecution is not only contrary to the express Commands of Christ, but may rob God of a Pleasure, which Peter, in the third Chapter and ninth Verse of his second Epistle, tells us he takes in the Penitence of a Sinner. The Lord is long-suffering, or has a very patient Mind, towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance: and Paul, in the 2d Chapter and 4th Verse of his 1st Epistle to Timothy, leaves no Room for the weak or wicked to set Bounds to the Love of God, who will have all Men, says he, to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of Truth:

Truth: and in this Verse is the Word Ἀνθρώπους, Men, which removes all Manner of Doubt concerning the Extent of the Mercy of God. Is persecuting, is killing Men, the Way to lead them to the Knowledge of Truth, and to Salvation? Hear ye, who preach the Gospel, and understand it not; never let Cruelty discover your Ignorance: attend ye who preach the Gospel and believe it not; never let Cruelty betray your Infidelity.

I hope such of my Christian Readers, as were of a different Opinion before, are now convinced, by what I have observed from the New Testament, of the Horridness of the Crime of persecuting, in any Degree, for Religion.

Paul was so confident of the Truth of the Doctrines of Christ, that he exhorts us to search into all Religions, that we may be satisfied of the Preference of one to the other. In the 21st Verse of the 5th Chapter of his Epistle to the Thessalonians, prove all Things, says he, adhere to that which is good. What could be his Intent in advising us to prove all Things, but that, by a Comparison of the Evidences of the Truth or Falseness of each Religion, we may be able to distinguish the Validity of one from the Insufficiency of the other? And how can such a Distinction be made without Freedom of Debate? If an Enquiry into all Religions is previously necessary before we can arrive at Truth, we must weigh the divers Testimonys for each in our own Minds, before we can determine which to chuse; and, if a Debate

in our own Breasts is necessary, Freedom of Debate betwixt two or more Persons is equally, or rather more, necessary; because some Reasons may be advanced, by a second or third Person, for or against this or that Religion, which may carry Conviction with them, and which may not occur to ourselves without consulting the Opinions of other Persons: and every Man doubtless is eager to embrace that Religion which in his Judgement carries the divine Marks of Truth with it; and no Man will reject that on which he thinks his Salvation, his eternal Happynefs, depending, but adhere to that which is good in his Eyes.

I could have collected many more Passages from the New Testament in Favour of what I proposed in this first Part of my Discourse; but these are sufficient; and my Manner of Reasoning on them I will venture to pronounce, as I am sure without any Arrogance I may, as fair as any mathematical Demonstration.

Your Grace will perceive that, in the Quotations which I have here used from the New Testament, I have payed a strict Regard to the Greek Text.

II. I will next produce the censuring Opinions of several of the antient Fathers of the Church, and eminent modern Divines, with what I advance.

As many of my Readers may not be able to understand the Fathers in their original Languages, I shall give as literal Translations as

I can of such Passages as I make use of from them; and, for the Satisfaction of those who may be inclined to compare my Translations with the Original, I shall insert proper References to the particular Parts of the Works from which I quote: and I doubt not but the Majority of my Readers will be delighted with the Sentiments of so many learned Men, among the Antients and Moderns, as I shall here exhibit on this Subject. I have already shewed the Opinions of Christ and his Apostles, as they are delivered down to us in the New Testament; and I shall now proceed to the Apostolic Fathers, whose Writings, tho they are not vulgarly received as canonical, have the Authority of some of the most learned Fathers of the Church in the next Century to them, and of many in after Ages, on their Side, and likewise of several considerable Divines among the Moderns; and even most of those who will not receive them as canonical hold them sacred in their Esteem, and regard them as the Works of the first, the Apostolic, Century.

I shall begin with a faithful Extract of that excellent Chapter, the second of the sixth Command, of the Shepherd of Hermas: it is a Dialogue betwixt the Shepherd and Hermas.

Shepherd. Man has two Genius's attending him, one of Equity, and the other of Iniquity.

Hermas. How, Lord, shall I be able to know them?

Shepherd. Hear and understand. The Genius of Equity is tender, mild, and bashful,

ful, courteous, and sedate; when therefore he enters into your Heart, he continually speaks within you concerning Justice, Modesty, Chastity, Mildness, Forgiveness, Charity, and Piety: when such Thoughts as these come into your Mind, you may be sure that the *Genius* of Equity is with you: confide in him, and in his Works. Now learn how the *Genius* of Iniquity operates: he is bitter, wrathful, and foolish; and his Works are hurtful. When Anger, the Lust of many * Riches, Luxury, Drunkenness, Desire of another's Right, Pride, Ambition, and other similar Vices, prevail in your Breast, know that the *Genius* of Iniquity is with you.

When those Virtues, pointed out by the Shepherd as the Credentials of the good Genius, prevail, they may properly be sayed to be of God, because they tend to the Benefit of Mankind; by promoting which we render ourselves acceptable to our Maker: and the Vices, which are pointed out as Indications of the evil Genius, may justly be sayed to be of the Devil, or of that wicked Disposition which is always at War with Virtue, with the Will of God.

Barnabas, in the nineteenth Chapter of his Catholic Epistle, exalts the Charity due to our Neighbour to a higher Degree of Love than even his Master did before him, if we construe his Words literally. You shall love your Neigh-

* The vulgar Reading is *Cupiditas multorum Operum*; but as *Cupiditas multarum Opum* is among the various Readings, I prefer it, because it seems to me the better of the two.

Neighbour, says he, better than your own Soul. The most narrow Sense to which this Precept can be contracted is this, that we must prefer the Welfare of our Neighbour to the Indulgence of the Desires of our own Souls; and it will bear but one more Construction; which is, that we should love our Neighbour better than our Lives; and I should not offer this last Explanation, could I not bring many Instances of the Word *ἑαυτὸν* being used in the same Sense with *ζωὴν*: and in this Sense Barnabas may allude to the Example of Christ, who is sayed to have layed down his Life for us. As Menardus, the Monk, observes, * Barnabas here speaks of that more sublime Affection than ordinary, which becomes the upright. This Remark, by one of the Roman Church, reflects no small Shame on the Practices of some of the reformed Churches, who do not consider, I fear, how much they are indebted, for a Reformation, to that Liberty which they endeavour to restrain.

I could bring many more Passages from the Fathers of the first Century in Favour of universal Charity; but I shall content myself with one more, from the forty-sixth Chapter of the second Book of the Apostolic Constitutions. Thus speak the Apostolic Laws, as by some Persons they are esteemed to be, chuse to submit to Injuriys; and pursue those Things which are pro-

* Itaque hoc Loco loquitur Sanctus Barnabas de sublimiori illa Dilectione, quæ perfectos decet.

productive of Peace, not only with your Brethren, but even with Infidels.

The Passages which I have quoted from the New Testament, and the Apostolic Fathers, will admit of no other Construction than what I give them; and if any other Passages are in the same Books, which may be produced in Favour of Compulsion in Religion, and of God's Regard to one Set of Men, without any Difference in their Virtue, more than to another, they only prove that the same Books contain Doctrines repugnant to one another, and consequently that they are not of God.

In the next Century a Set of learned Men offer their Testimonys to us, Men whom your Grace knows to have been as conversant, as we see by some of their Writings they were, with the polite Authors of Antiquity, as with those Books on which their Religion is founded; some of which had Talents above the Rank of common Men; whose extensive Learning joined with those Talents rendered them better Judges of the Subjects on which they treated, and of the Languages in which those Subjects were written, than many who came after them; and whose Proximity of Succession to Christ and his Apostles gave them an Advantage over later Christian Writers; and whose Manner of writing, and Patience under Afflictions, free them from the Imputation of Insincerity; and if any Facts are related by them which have the Appearance of Falsehood in them, and which perhaps are really false, I am inclined to be-

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lieve

lieve them not the Authors of the Impositions, but that their Zeal for Christianity suffered them to embrace as Truths what, in other Cases, they would have rejected with Disdain and honest Indignation. Your Grace, I dare say, will immediately recollect some Passages in their Writings, which will justify the last Part of my Judgement of them. These, my Lord, are the just Characteristics of many of the Fathers of the second Century, notwithstanding the particular Errors, Differences, and Odditys, which they had, among them. Let us see what their Sentiments were concerning Charity and Liberty.

Says Justin Martyr, in his second Apology, our heavenly Father delights in Penitence more than in Punishment: and in the following Words he has taught us to love all Men: "if ye love those who love you, what new Doctrine do ye follow? Sinners do so: but I say, pray for your Enemys, and love those who hate you." In the same Apology Justin wisely explodes the Folly and Wickedness of one Man persecuting another for Religion: he observes rightly that all Men are not of one Religion, but some profess one, and some another; so that, the World thro, Men may be sayed to be impious to one another, because they do not worship alike. This Remark was seasonably made to the Gentiles, and to the Romans particularly, who differed in their own Religions; nor is it less applicable now to Christians, who dissent as much from
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one another as possibly the Gentiles could in the Time of Justin Martyr, and yet persecute one another.

Athenagoras, in his *Apology*, gives an invincible Reason why every Man should be free to chuse his Manner of Worship. He lays it down as necessary in the Nature of Things that every one should have the Liberty of chusing his Manner of worshipping the Gods, that Men may be deterred from evil Actions by the Fear of divine Justice. As Tertullian, in the twenty-eighth Chapter of his *Apology*, judiciously says, it must certainly be thought foolish in any one to be compelled to worship the Gods, whom he ought to please for his own Sake. As the same learned Father well observes, in his *Epistle to Scapula*, it is a Part of human Right, and Power which we have by Nature, to worship what we think the proper Object of our Adoration: and the Religion of one Person neither hurts, nor profits, another; nor is it the Part of Religion to force Religion, which ought to be spontaneously embraced, and not by Compulsion. These are the wise and humane Sentiments of primitive Christians, whose Writings illustrate the Doctrines of their Master; and who themselves sought neither worldly Riches nor Glory, but the immediate Peace and eternal Happyness of Mankind; who abhorred all Notions of Cruelty, and prided themselves in being thought worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus. How has the Church of Christ, at va-
rious

rious Times, differed from itself! In the first, the earliest, Ages of the Church, Virtue consisted in forgiving their Enemys, in kissing the Rod of Persecution, and courting the Flames. Modern Christians reverse the Doctrine, and act as if they believed they rendered Service to God by tormenting Men, and Men who are not their Enemys, but who happen to profess an Opinion opposite to their own. Freedom of Enquiry after Truth was thought necessary by the early Teachers of the Gospel; but now a Person of exalted Virtues, and superior Talents and Learning, can not, in some Christian Countrys, endeavour to restore Truth to her primitive Purity without Danger. That Law, says Tertullian, in the sixth Chapter of his first Book to the Nations, is to be suspected, which will not suffer an Examination. The same may be sayed of all Books as well as Laws; for the Value of none can be discovered but by a rational Enquiry into their Merits.

Some perhaps may ask, why the antient Fathers were so forward to apologise for their Religion to the Emperors and Senate of Rome, and so earnest, as they were, in their Dissuasions from persecuting the Christians, if their Duty was to triumph in their Tortures, and to bless the Hand which scourged them? Hear Tertullian to Scapula: tho we contend, says he, with all your Cruelty, we rejoice more if we are condemned than if we are acquitted; we do not send this Letter to you, because we fear for ourselves and our Friends,
but

but because we fear for you, and for all our Enemys: for we are commanded to love our Enemys, and to pray for those who persecute us. It is the Part of all Men to love their Friends, but of Christians only to love their Enemys; we therefore grieve because of your Ignorance, and commiserate the Errors of Humanity. *Says the same Author, in the thirty-seventh Chapter of his Apology,* if we are commanded to love our Enemys, whom have we to hate? And, if we are forbid Revenge when offended, whom can we hurt? *To the Reasons which I have already quoted from Tertullian against Compulsion in Religion I will add this from the twenty-fourth Chapter of the same Work from which I last quoted:* none but Man would desire to be worshiped by an unwilling Mind: and among Men, he might have sayed, none but an unreasonable Man. *If God would not be worshiped by an unwilling Mind, Liberty of Choice is certainly necessary for all Men; and, previous to Choice, Freedom of Enquiry and Debate.*

Thus, my Lord, I think I have demonstrated, beyond Contradiction, that Christ and his Apostles, and the Fathers of the first and second Centurys, were against Persecution, and for Freedom of Debate, in Matters of Religion: and many more are the Authoritys which I could bring from the same Fathers which I have quoted, and from several which I have not quoted of the same and later Ages, in Behalf of the Principles which I here advance: but these,

these, I hope, are sufficient; and as these Passages from the Fathers speak, and illustrate, the Doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, I shall now call in the Assistance of some eminent modern Divines of our own Nation; whose generous Sentiments of Liberty are not inferior to those of the Fathers. I shall begin with those who are beyond the Reach of Envy and Malice by being numbered with the dead.

I shall not swell this Letter with all the Quotations which I could produce from deceased English Divines in Behalf of Liberty, but content myself with quoting from two of them only, and naming some as proper to be consulted on this Occasion. The Author of the whole Duty of Man and Doctor Samuel Clarke are the two which I think worthy of being distinguished from the Rest; who are both justly ranked among the most celebrated Theologists: the first of which is one of the earliest, and the other one of the latest, of our own Country, who writ well in Defence of universal Charity and Liberty. Some perhaps may say I wander from one Part of my Design in quoting from the whole Duty of Man, the Author of which is not known, and who possibly might not have been a Divine; but, as who the Author was is not known, he might possibly have been a Divine; and that he was is more likely than that he was not, notwithstanding the different Rumours about that pious Writer.

In the tenth Part of the whole Duty of Man, says the Author, I come now to the

third Part of our Dutys, those to our Neighbour, which is by the Apostle summed up in Gross in the Word *Righteousness*; by which is meant not only bare *Justice*, but all Kind of Charity also. *In the same Part, speaking of the hellish Passion Malice, he expresses his Detestation of it, not only in a Christian and humane, but in a pathetic, Manner.* This is a most savage, inhuman, Humour thus to take Pleasure in the Sadness and Afflictions of others; whoever harbours it in his Heart may truly be sayed to be possessed with a Devil, for it is the Nature only of those accursed Spirits to delight in the Miseries of other Men; and, till that be cast out, they are fit only to dwell, as the possessed Person did, (*Mark 5. 2.*) among Graves and Tombs, where are none capable of receiving Affliction by them. *Hear, from the same Part of the whole Duty of Man, the Christian Commentator on the Gospel, and the Teacher of Humanity: God alone, says he, hath Right to dispose of the Life of Man; 'twas he alone that gave it, and it is he alone that hath Power to take it away; but he that murders a Man does wrest this Power out of God's Hand, which is the highest Pitch of rebellious Presumption: and, lest some should limit this Mercy, this necessary Duty, to a peculiar Set of Men, or to particular Circumstances, the same devout Author, in the same Partition of the same Work, leaves them without any Excuse for Barbarity, by telling them that*
neither

neither Injurys to themselves, nor what they may presume to call Injurys to God, are justifiable Provocations to Acts of Cruelty: neither, says he, can any Man excuse himself by saying what he has done was only in Return of some Injury offered him by the other. This Injustice, continues he, soon after in the same Section, ascends higher, even to God himself who hath reserved Vengeance as his own peculiar Right. Vengeance is mine, I will repay, sayeth the Lord. (Rom. 12.) He that will act Revenge for himself, what does he, but incroach upon this special Right and Prerogative of God, snatch the Sword out of his Hand, as if he knew better how to wield it? Which is at once a Robbery, and Contempt, of the divine Majesty. *The Reason of my being so short on this Text from Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which I quote in the first Part of this Letter, was because I reserved what I had farther to say on it till the Introduction of this Explanation of it from the whole Duty of Man: to which I will here take the Liberty to add some Observations of my own. If Murder is a Transgression of the Will of God, who takes Vengeance to himself, every Kind of Persecution, or Prosecution, for Religion, is equally a Transgression, even if the Person persecuted, or prosecuted, suffers but a Moment's Pain, or is at the least Expence, because of his Persecution, or Prosecution; nay, if the Person persecuted, or prosecuted, suffers no Pain or Expence, the Persecutor, or Prosecutor,*

cutor, is nevertheless inexcuseable for assuming to himself a Power which belongs only to God. He that passes an Inch over the prohibited Line is as much a Transgressor as he that goes a Mile beyond it.

Christianity can not be of any Service to Mankind, but must be quite contrary, if it divests Men of the Principles of Humanity on any Account whatever; they therefore who would approve themselves the best Advocates for Christianity should in their Actions exalt the Virtues of Humanity; otherwise they will be subject to the Reproach of all good Men. What an intolerable Shame, says the same Author, in the twelfth Part of that Work, is this, that we Christians, who are by the Precepts of our Master set to those higher Duties of Charity, should, instead of practising them, quite unlearn those common Rules of Justice, which mere Nature teaches! Now let us see what Bounds this truly pious Author sets to our Charity: if this Virtue, says he, in the sixteenth Part of the same Work, was to be exercised but towards some Sort of Persons, it might consist with Malice to others, it being possible for a Man, that bitterly hates one, to love another; but we are to take Notice that this Charity must not be so confined, but must extend itself to all Men in the World, particularly to Enemies, or else it is not that divine Charity commended to us by Christ. Here breathes the true Spirit of primitive Christianity! and I can not take my Leave of
the

the whole Duty of Man without extoling the Author of it as a bright and singular Example of Christian Virtues, nor without paying a peculiar Tribute of Respect to his Memory.

Objections may be made to some particular Passages, in the whole Duty of Man, concerning the ceremonial Parts of Religion: however, I will venture to affirm that the Book is calculated for the Benefit of Society; for, would all Persons be directed by the Precepts of it, not one human Creature could be hurtful to another; but, on the contrary, the Contention among Mankind would be, who should excel in Acts of Benevolence. Humility is a Virtue recommended by Christ; and our Author has proved himself possessed of it in an extraordinary Degree, by desiring to have his Name concealed, and by taking such effectual Methods to answer that End as the Consequence has shewed he did take. When we read a Book of superior Merit, written by an unknown Hand, we generally frame to ourselves an agreeable Idea of the Author; and when we read the whole Duty of Man, we must naturally think of a Person arayed with the Christian Virtues, Charity, Temperance, and Meekness; because the Tree is known by the Fruit; but, notwithstanding the Humility of the Writer, great is his Honour who will always be dignified among Men, while a Christian Book remains, by the Title of Author of the whole Duty of Man, without any other Denomination. What Virtue, or what Fame, is contained in the Letters which compose

the Names of Cicero, Virgil, or of any other exalted Character of passed Times, what, I say, but that they were the Writers of such and such useful and illustrious Works? Let us change the Names of Cicero and Virgil, and attribute to each the Writings of the other; neither is a Loser; for we admire them for their immortal Pages, and not for the Names which they had before they wrote. The Author of the Georgics and Æneis would live in the same Degree of Reputation without the Name of Virgil as he does with it: and the Author of the whole Duty of Man wants no other Appellation, because that is the Title which must distinguish him, if he now was known by another Name. His Humility consists in concealing his Name while alive, which was the only Time in which he could enjoy the Fame, among Men, of the Author of the whole Duty of Man; for if he is now conscious of the Reputation which he acquired, he owes not his Reward to those for whose Benefit his Book was written. Much more could I say on this Subject; but what I have already sayed, if calmly considered by some Men who are of an ambitious and furious Disposition, would abate the Severity of their Temper, and lessen the Number of malevolent Acts in the World; for I am persuaded that many, thro a mistaken Notion of Glory, an Overfondness of a Name while living here, perpetrate such Crimes as a considerate Man would abhor the Thought of. I now address myself to the Author of the whole Duty of Man.

Under

Under whatever Title, or Name, you sojourned in this World, may you enjoy the Fruits of your Virtue in another; and on Earth may Mankind in general, and the Clergy in particular, reap the Benefits of your Labour, by following your Precepts of Humanity, and not adding to the Catalogue of their Sins.

I hope, my Lord, the Digression which I have here made will be thought excuseable, since, in paying a Tribute of Respect to the Author of the whole Duty of Man, I am guilty of no Adulation to any Person or Family.

Now I have shewed the Sentiments of this excellent Author concerning universal Charity, I will use the Language of a late very learned Divine concerning Persecution for Religion. Doctor Samuel Clarke, in the first Discourse of the seventh Volume of his Sermons, on the twenty-third Verse of the fourteenth Chapter of Luke, has these Words: it is originally, in the very Nature of Things, inconsistent and absurd to think that a right Sense of Religion can be put into Men's Minds by Force of Arms: for what is Religion, but such a Persuasion of Mind towards God, as produces Obedience to his Commands, arising from a due Sense of him in the Understanding, and a just Fear and Love of him in the Affections, and a Choice or Preference of Virtue in the Will? To attempt to influence the Will by Force is like applying Sounds to the Eyes in order to be seen, or Colours to the Ears in order to be heard. The Absurdity,

in both Cases, is exactly the same; for as Nothing affects the Eyes but Light, nor the Ears but Sounds, so Nothing affects the Understanding and the Will but Reason and Persuasion. *Here Philosophy and Christianity join their Forces to demonstrate the Wickedness and Absurdity of Persecution, and the Necessity of Freedom of Enquiry and Debate in religious Affairs. They who are inclined to see the Opinions of more of our late Divines on this Subject may find Abundance of generous and elevated Thoughts in some of the Sermons of Dr. Barrow, and Archbishop Tillotson, in some Treatises of Chillingworth, and in Dr. Scott's Christian Life. More of our deceased Clergy have adorned their Works with Sentiments of Liberty; but as many Passages in the Writings of the Authors which I here name are now fresh in my Memory, I chuse them as the proper immediate Objects of Recommendation.*

Among the living Advocates for Liberty, my Lord, I will begin with the Sentiments of one whose solid Judgement and Virtue gained him early the Favour of his Country, and whose Veracity has never been disputed. Bishop Hoadley, in the fourth Section of the second Chapter of his Book called the common Rights of Subjects defended, says the Point of Concern to any Nation is not so much whether the Government be in the Hands of professed Christians, as whether those professed Christians, who have it in their Hands, behave themselves like Christians, in their
making

making and executing only such Laws as are consistent with moral Justice, and Christian Charity. *I will take the Freedom to add, to what this judicious Prelate has advanced, that an heathen Administration, which pays an exact Regard to moral Justice, is much more eligible than a Christian, even a protestant, Administration that attempts the Abridgement of our moral and religious Rights, or that departs, in the least Degree, from the Laws of Morality.* What a Banter, says this excellent Divine in the fifth Section of the same Chapter, upon all that can be called common Sense must Christians and Protestants think themselves still affronted with, whilst we tell them that we claim the Use of the Scriptures for all Christians capable of using them, but that we reserve to ourselves the Judgement of that Capacity? Will not any Man of common Probity and common Understanding bid us take back our good Words, and our hypocritical Shew of Favour, and act a more open and generous Part, by denying this Right to all, (as the grossest and most consistent Popery does,) than we act by mocking them with the Present of a Right, the Exercise of which we give and take away at Pleasure? Were I a Papist, I would rejoice to meet with such an Advocate for Protestantism as would chuse to maintain it on the Foot of Popery itself. Will it lighten the Chain of Servitude, says the same Author, and elegantly, in the sixth Section of the same Chapter,

only

only to change the Name from *papal* Invasion to *legal* Invasion, from *popish* Restraints to *protestant* Restraints? No: it rather increases the Hardship by adding Mockery to the Tyranny.

The following Argument, founded on the same Consideration, is used by Bishop Hare for Freedom of Debate, in the Conclusion of his Letter to a young Clergyman, concerning the Difficultys and Discouragements which attend the Study of the Scriptures in the Way of private Judgement: he rightly observes that whilst we take the Sense of the Scriptures upon Content, and see not with our own Eyes, we insensibly relapse into the Principles of Popery, and give up the only Ground on which we can justify our Separation from the Church of Rome. The same Prelate, in the same Work, has pointed out the Methods by which such a Relapse is to be avoided, and by which Liberty and Truth are to be established: let us do what we can, says he, that learned Men may have full Liberty to study the Scriptures freely and impartially, good Encouragement given them to go thro the Labour and Difficulties of such a Study, not slightly and superficially, but with such Application and Diligence as the Nature of the Thing requires, and have leave to speak their Sense with all Manner of Safety, that their Opinions may be examined fairly and with Temper, that their Names be not unjustly loaded with Calumny and Slander, that

their Words and Actions may be interpreted with the same Candour as is shown to those that differ from them, that, if what they advance be right, it may be received, if wrong, their Errors may be refuted, as the Mistakes of learned Men on other Subjects, if doubtful, and the Scriptures say so little, or speak so obscurely, that Nothing can certainly be decided either Way, that then Nobody may be obliged to take either Side as necessary, that, whether their Notions be right or wrong, their Persons may in all Events be safe, and their Maintenance not affected by it. *These are certainly the only Means by which we can discover Truth, and root out Error.*

Bishop Chandler, in his Sermon preached before the House of Lords, January the thirtieth 1718, lays it down as an incontestable Assertion, that Force and Persecution are improper Methods to produce Religion, which, continues he, ought to be the Result of Persuasion and Choice.

Bishop Gibson, in his Preface to four extraordinary good Sermons published in the Year 1719, recommends, in a true Christian Manner, Unanimity among the reformed Churches; and, after the Examples of the Archbishops Sancroft, Tillotson, and Tenison, he advises the Members of the Church of England and Dissenters to converse with Mildness, and amicably, together: and in the second Sermon, which is a Piece of more than little Merit, he says, it is agreed on all Hands that, by the
 Terms

Terms of Christianity, there ought to be no Persecution purely for the Sake of Religion. *He seems, in the same Discourse, so averse to Persecution, as every righteous Man will be, that he would not have the Crueltys of the Papists towards Protestants instigate us to Barbaritys towards any of their Church: far be it from us, says he, to make this merciless Treatment of our Brethren, having before spoke of the Crueltys of Papists towards Protestants, a Rule of our Carriage and Behaviour towards theirs. We have not so learned Christ as to think Fire and Faggot a fit Application to the Consciences of Christians, or to reckon the Destruction of their Bodies a proper Means for the Salvation of their Souls. These are not only the Doctrines of Christ, but the Doctrines of Reason; for, notwithstanding the Inhumanity with which Roman Catholics treat Protestants, we ought not to exert our Power, when we have it, over them in the same wicked Manner.*

I will close my Authoritys, in Behalf of Liberty, with a Passage from the Writings of a learned, and an upright, Christian. Mr. Whiston is not only for allowing Infidels the Privilege of publishing their Thoughts with Safety, but would have them invited, by public Authority, to dispute the Veracity of revealed Religion: in his Confutation of Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology, he declares himself to be fully of Opinion that the only honest, and most effectual, Way of supporting the sacred Writings,

tings, against our present Unbelievers, is not to attempt the Suppression of any real Arguments they pretend to have against Revelation, but to invite them, even by public Authority, and without any Danger from the Laws now in Being, to produce all the real or original Evidence they think they have discovered against any Parts of the Bible, against any Parts of the Jewish or Christian Religions, and that in Order to their being fully weighed and considered by all learned Men.

No Person will easily be induced to believe that any of these great living Advocates for Liberty can ever become Apostates from it, either in their Actions or Writings; but if at any Time they should, as the Minds of some Men are prone to change as Circumstances vary, their Apostacy can never destroy the Validity of these Arguments; but it will be a presumptive Evidence against them of their being influenced by some Motives contrary to Reason or Virtue.

III. Now, my Lord, I come to my third and last Head; in which I will demonstrate from Reason, from the Nature of Things, the Wickedness of persecuting for Religion, and the Folly and Baseness of attempting to lay any Restraint on the Minds of Men.

Great Part of what would otherwise have came under this Head has been anticipated in some of my Remarks on the Texts which I quoted from the New Testament, and on the
 Passages

Passages which I have used from the Fathers, and our modern Divines. I shall avoid Repetition and Prolixity, and be as concise as my Subject will allow me to be.

*When we begin to read any Book, we should sit down without Partiality to the Work: before we open it, we should consider that we are going to read the Writings of Men, and that we are Men who are the Readers, and must consequently judge with the Judgement of Men, with those rational Facultys with which we find ourselves endowed. The next Consideration is, what must be the Criteria by which we must judge of the Merit of what we are going to read: here we must observe that I am now speaking of such Books as contain religious, moral, historical, or philosophical Facts, or Enquiries, and particularly religious and moral, exclusive of Books of Poetry and such Pieces as require a peculiar Taste; either additional to Reason, or a Knack which many Persons, who are very weak in other Affairs, have been possessed of. The Consideration now, I say, is what must be the Criteria, by which we must distinguish Truth from Falsehood: and here God naturally claims our first Thoughts; the Mode of whose Existence is still the Subject of Dispute among some, and ever will be perhaps among Men, but his Existence I presume is not; and tho it may be reckoned Presumption in finite Beings to ascribe Attributes to an infinite Being, yet I think Divines are agreed on his Omnipotence: I name no other Attribute; for
where*

where Omnipotence is, I am certain infallible Wisdom must be; and where the latter is, I am sure universal Goodness must be. I dare say that your Grace will allow, with me, that more Deductions from the Attribute of Omnipotence are here needless: Power unbounded, Wisdom infallible, and diffusive Goodness, must therefore be the Criteria, by which we must judge, according to our Facultys, of such Writings as relate to the Deity. The next Consideration must be concerning ourselves, whether the Doctrines contained in the Books which we read are destructive of Humankind, or of the Peace of Mankind, or whether in the End they promote the Good of Society, and are agreeable to Truth, to the Nature of Things. These must be the Criteria by which finite Beings must distinguish Truth from Falsehood in what they read, and more particularly in religious and moral Books than in any other. These I say must be the Criteria; because no Man, in his Senses, will presume to say he has any other, I mean any supernatural Helps, when he sits down to read a Book: but if any Man should say he has such Helps, and if we should allow what he says to be true, he must be looked on as an Exception, as one distinguished from the Rest of Men; and those his boasted supernatural Helps being such to himself only, and not to another Man, these my Criteria stand. As human Wisdom must be the Judge, free Enquiry must be made into the Evidences before a Judgement can be passed: whoever there-

therefore attempts to overthrow Liberty of Enquiry, which is the Support of Truth, and the natural and divine Property of Mankind, is guilty of Impiety to the great Disposer of all Things, from whom this Property is derived. My Position in this Argument of a Criterion deduced from the Nature of Things, according to Appearances, is such as human Reason furnishes us with, and is founded on a Consideration of the Honour of God, and of the Welfare of Mankind; and the Conclusion is undoubtedly natural.

Here an Enquiry into the End of the rational, or human, Constitution is necessary. The End which seems, from Appearances, to be designed by God is, that we should be well affected one towards another; and that the Promotion of the Felicity of one another should be our chief, our ultimate, View; and that we should likewise be patient under Afflictions, not doubting the Possibility of God's conferring future Benefits on us: what farther End the Almighty has in his System of this World is clearly known to none but himself, unless he has favoured any Part of his Creation, in this or some other World, with a Revelation of his Will concerning us; and if one Part of that System, in which we are little Actors, is, that the Life of Man in this World is a State of Preparation for a better, an exact Obedience to that Part of God's Will which is visible (that is, our continuing an unreserved Affection for one another, our being patient under Afflictions,

tions, and, to speak our whole Duty briefly, to act according to the visible Propriety of Nature,) must be the only Way in which we are to travel to a happier and more exalted State: I must here take Notice, that a due Acknowledgement of his Power, and of the Benefits of Existence, is highly requisite whether we guess right at his invisible End or not. Hence I am led to ask every Man whether he thinks he should answer the visible End of God by endeavouring to rob his fellow Creature of his first, natural, and divine, Property, that is Liberty of Enquiry into the Goodness of his Benefactor? And whether he does not think he ought to be an eternal Outcast from future Blessings, if such are to be, for transgressing the Will of God, by the Oppression of his fellow Creature?

If I here speak positive of some, and doubtful of other, Things, no Judgement can be made, without Partiality, of my Belief or Disbelief of what are doubtful; because I confine myself to the Nature of Things, from Appearances. I am under no Apprehension of your Grace's Misconstruction; but I would remove, if possible, all Prejudice from other Readers.

Many Things in Nature carry their Evidence with them, even to shallow Capacities: such are not proper Subjects of Dispute, tho some Men have been lavish of their Logic on such Subjects, and raised to themselves some Sort of Characters on them: but what is to be done with those Subjects which carry not their own Evidence clear-

ly with them, even to discerning Eyes, and which ought, for the Sake of Truth, to come under Debate? Must the Fool, and the wise, alike submit to the Determination of one Man, or of one Body of Men? If they submit to Truths, without Conviction, where is their Merit? And if they submit to known Errors, is Nobody guilty of a Crime in the Continuation of them? Yes, Somebody is; and I will affirm, so much I know of the Will of God, that a voluntary Continuation of erroneous Practices, of Falsehoods, of any Kind, is an Impiety, an Affront offered to the God of Truth: nor does a Man's Crime consist only in continuing himself in Falsehoods, but in being instrumental to the keeping innocent Persons in them; for if an Adherence to Truth is a Virtue, every Deviation from it is a Crime; and the Degree of the Crime is according to the Degree of the Deviation; and the innocent Person who is kep'd from walking in the Ways of Truth, by other Men, is kep'd from having that Degree of Virtue which would recommend him to a higher Degree of Favour with God; I say a higher Degree of Favour, because the innocent erroneous Worshiper, who is a moral Person, can be no Object of Indignation in the Eye of God; but the Crimes of which he would be guilty, if he erred willingly, are all added to the Account of those who, chaining him to the Paths of Error, withhold him from the Search of Truth.

Now, my Lord, permit me to be more particular, and to apply my Argument to Christianity

nity itself, still confining myself to the Nature of Things. Christianity was founded on Principles of Liberty; otherwise primitive Christians, and even Christ himself, were justly punished, and not persecuted, as Innovators, as Broachers of a new and strange Doctrine, of a Doctrine impious to those who were of different Religions in those Times. Surely those Christians who have the Cause of Truth at Heart will think with Horror on laying any Restraint on Liberty of Debate, when they are taught to consider what Degrees of Justification they produce to heathen, and all other, Persecutors, by favouring such a Restraint. The Persecutors of Christ knew not that he was the Son of God; for if they had, instead of Persecution, they had undoubtedly offered Adoration; and, supposing Christ not to be the Son of God, they were Rebels against Nature, and against God himself, by invading the dearest Property of Man, and the fairest Gift of Heaven, Liberty, and by adding to that Impiety the cruel Murder of perhaps an innocent Person.

The Reformation here in England under King Henry the eighth, and the happy Revolution under King William the third, are remarkable and just Evidences in Behalf of Liberty. If the Reformation under King Henry the eighth will not be allowed a Foundation on the Equity of Freedom of Debate, we must derive the Origin of it from the turbulent Passions, and most licentious Vices, of a resolute Prince: one of these Causes must be the Groundwork of the Re-

formation; and I hope all good Protestants will chuse that which appears the more honourable of the two to the reformed Churches, if Truth will permit them to make that Choice. Whatever was the Source of the Reformation under King Henry the eighth, the Revolution under King William the third was undertaken and compleated entirely on the Principles which I am now defending; to which the Prince now on the Throne owes his Crown; and for which Principles your Grace was a strenuous Advocate when Liberty seemed forsaking the Land.

Let us now consider the Case of those who are taught, from their Dawn of Apprehension, to believe the Books commonly called the Scriptures the Writings of inspired Men, and who ground their Salvation on their Faith in those Books, and who are indefatigable in the Search of Truth, Men who make the Interpretation of those Scriptures the chief Busyness of their Lives, and when they think they have made a just Explanation of some Passages, different from any before received, on the Belief of which they think the Salvation of Men, in some Degree, depending, they believe they sin against God if they conceal their Explanation from Men. Let us consider the Case of these Persons; and some such I know now living: ought they to be punished for giving Proofs of the Worthyness of their Dispositions, in communicating to other Persons Discoverys from which they receive inexpressible Comfort themselves, and
who

who think they should commit a great Sin by concealing them?

Some build their Faith on the literal Sense of the Pentateuch, and other Parts of the old and new Testament; and some allegorise only the Pentateuch, some that and the Prophets; and even the levitical Laws have been allegorised away to the Destruction of the Letter; some cleave to the Doctrines of Athanasius, some to those of Arrius, and some to those of Socinus; and yet all believe the Scriptures, and fix their Hopes of Salvation on their Faith in them; but, as different Men, they have different Understandings; and, as they have different Understandings, they must consequently make different Inferences from what they read, all making the Scripture the Criterion of their Faith and Judgement: therefore till all Men shall have the same Portion of Understanding, and shall be wrought to an exact Similitude in their Constitutions, the Impossibility of their making the same Inferences from what Books they read, especially such as the old and new Testaments, will continue; and, while that Impossibility remains, he that persecutes another for embracing, or communicating, what from the Conviction of his Mind he thinks true, is a Sinner against the holy Ghost, or the God of Truth: moreover, he that attempts to silence the Voice of another, till he can convince all Men that he is himself infallible, flies in the Face of God, by endeavouring to close those A-

venues to Truth which the Almighty originally sat open to all Men.

Your Grace knows that Nothing has kindled more Animositys, and Flames, in the Church than exacting from Men an Assent to Articles of Faith, or a Confession at least of Belief in them: and why did such Exactions create such Disturbances? Because, when Men seriously examined their own Hearts, they found that they could not give up the Exercise of that Liberty of thinking which they were by Nature Masters of: and Nothing can be more unjust than the Wickedness which some Men in Power have been guilty of, in making Infringements on the Libertys of other Men, even while they felt that they themselves could not give up the Exercise of such Libertys.

The common Plea against Freedom of Debate is, that the Propagators of new Doctrines distract the Minds of Men; but, if we make a faithful Enquiry, we shall find that very few, if any, are disturbed by the Propagation of new Doctrines. The Laws of the Land, those Barriers against Iniquity, still exist the Terror of such Evil-doers as feel not the Check of Conscience, and who are deterred by no other Objects of Fear from Acts of Violation; and should a Calvin and a Luther arise in every Age, and in every Country, those Fortifications, the Laws, erected to guard the Lives and Propertys of Men, would not be shaken by the Innovations of new Sects of Religion; the Affairs of the World would go on never-
theless,

theless, and Men be diligent in their several Vocations, and answer the Ends of Society: and if Disturbances have arose from Innovations, the Enemys to Liberty were the Authors of those Disturbances, and not the Innovations themselves. Let the few who are disturbed by Freedom of Debate ask themselves why they are disturbed, and deliberate on the Question, and they will perceive their Uneasyness to arise from a foolish, or wicked, Principle; for, if they are convinced of the Truth of what they read, they are obliged to the Writer for their Conviction; and if they are convinced of the Falseness of what they read, they naturally reject them: and whatever is written, on a deserving Subject, if honestly and well written, must edify those who read and understand; and whatever is written with a dishonest or foolish Intent can never hurt an understanding Mind; and they who do not understand what they read can not be affected any Way by what they read.

The last, and not the weakest, Argument which I shall use for Freedom of Debate is grounded on the Validity of Truth, and the Weakness of Error. Truth must be allowed by all Men to have more and stronger Evidences for it than Falseness; (the Reader must observe that I am speaking chiefly of religious and moral Truth and Falseness;) therefore if Advocates should arise for both without any Advantage over one another in Understanding, the Advocates for Truth would doubtless be too powerful for the other: but, as Truth has more and

stronger Evidences for it than Falsehood, we must naturally suppose the wisest Men to be on the Side of Truth; that Cause therefore which is in itself the strongest, and which has the most able Advocates for it, will doubtless always prevail over a weak Cause defended by weak Advocates: for these Reasons every Controversy is in Favour of Truth; because the ablest Advocates have an Opportunity offered to them to oppose the strongest Arguments in a just Cause to weak Arguments, for weak the best must be, in a bad Cause: whenever therefore Force is used, for the Decision of a Controversy, it is a Sign of weak, and sometimes wicked, Men engaged in a weak Cause.

None but the foolish, or ill-designing, Man fears the Discovery of Truth, or trembles at an Enquiry into it. Some Truths may be prudently concealed a-while, and require Secrecy consistent with Honour, according to particular Circumstances; but if they should be unseasonably revealed, the wise and honest Man would be free from Fear.

I doubt not but your Grace judges what I have here addressed to you to be but a Preparation towards a greater Work; and whatever I shall hereafter publish shall be agreeable to Virtue, as I hope this Letter is; and none but such as find an Interest in being Enemy's to Truth will have any Reason to be apprehensive of Danger from what I write: and as I am resolved to convert the Fruits of my Studys and Meditations in this Life to the Benefit of Mankind,

Archbishop of CANTERBURY. 41

as much as my Abilitys will permit, Nothing shall divert me from this Resolution but invincible Oppositions to my Design. These are some of the Means by which I hope to atone for the too many Offences of my passed Days; and by which likewise I hope to discharge Part of my Duty to God, and to Mankind; and that I may be as little defective in either as possible is the constant Wish of,

My LORD,

With an unreserved Respect,

YOUR GRACE'S

Most faithful,

And most humble, Servant.

A
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
WILL of GOD
BY THE
LIGHT of NATURE
IN EIGHT
DISCOURSES;

To which is prefixed

An INTRODUCTION

SHEWING THE

Necessity of enquiring after TRUTH,

WITH AN

Examination into the Foundation of ERROR.

DEMONSTRATION

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SHOWING THE

Necessity of enquiring after Truth

WITH AN

Examination into the Foundation of Error.

T H E

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

The Necessity of enquiring after Truth demonstrated, with an Examination into the Foundation of Error.

I. **A**N Obedience payed to the Rule of Right advances our Happyness here; and consequently every Deviation from it is a Deviation from the Road which leads to Happyness.

II. *An Obedience payed to the Rule of Right is an Obedience payed to the Will of God; which appears from that Rule of everlasting Righteousness which the Deity makes the Measure of his Actions.*

If an Obedience payed to the Rule of Right promotes our Happyness here, and if every Deviation from it is a Deviation from the Road which leads to Happyness, an Enquiry after Truth is absolutely necessary to our Felicity;

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licity; because the Rule of Right being founded on Truth and Beauty, which in the moral System are inseparable, we can not arrive to the Certainty of the Rule of Right without being able to distinguish Truth from Falsehood. Truth is the Existence of Things as they really are; and Beauty is that which arises to the Mind in exact Proportions, and which gives the Pleasure which the Mind enjoys from Propriety of Action: and these are Truths easily attainable, being among the clearest Propositions in Nature. Thus we see an Enquiry after Truth entirely necessary, even if it affects only our Well-being here.

If an Obedience payed to the Rule of Right is an Obedience payed to the Will of God, an Enquiry after Truth is absolutely necessary to discover that to be the Will of God; and whatever Part of the Will of God is requisite for us to know, it can not be known but by an Enquiry after Truth; and if the Will of God is founded on Truth, as it undoubtedly is, every Degree of Error which we run into casts us, in Proportion to the Degree of Error, to such a Distance from the Knowledge of the Will of God. What Degrees of Danger speculative Errors may subject the ignorant to I will not here presume to assert; but, as says an illustrious and ever memorable Author, ** what Merit can there be in believing God, and his Providence,*
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* The Earl of Shaftesbury, in his Letter on Enthusiasm.

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*upon frivolous and weak Grounds? What Virtue in assuming an Opinion contrary to the Appearance of Things, and resolving to hear Nothing which may be sayed against it? I will not, I say, presume to assert what Danger speculative Errors subject the ignorant to; but I concur in the Opinion of a very learned and eminent Divine * that God may require us to take Notice of some Things at our Peril, to enquire into them, and to consider them thoroughly. We can not expect to render ourselves acceptable to God by embracing, and continuing, Sentiments of him derogatory from his Honour, and repugnant to his Attributes, even supposing the Innocency of Error, which is well treated of by a worthy Divine †, such Error as goes not beyond Speculation, yet we can not expect that Error should be a Recommendation.*

As the Education of Children, thro most Parts of the World, is only in different Degrees of Error, every one should early begin to purge himself of the erroneous Principles which he imbibed in his Youth. When we make our Enquiries into the Will of God, we should divest ourselves of all Prejudices; we should look on all Books as the Works of Men, and judge them as such; we should disjoin the monstrous Association of Ideas which a wrong Education has grafted in us;
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* Dr. Clarke, in his *Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of natural Religion*, &c. Prop. 15 and last.

† Dr. Sykes.

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we should separate the Idea of the true God from the Idea of such a God as the Schools teach us to worship. This is a Duty incumbent on every Man as soon as he feels the Dawn of Reason in him. As soon as the Appearance of Fallacy, that is the Indication of it being Fallacy, presents itself to his Mind, Man should reject it as a noxious Guest; and when the Necessity of this Duty appears, the Necessity of enquiring after Truth, he should cast his Eye into the Book of *Nature*, which the bounteous Hand of *God* has opened to him; and there he will read, in the most legible Characters, the Relations in which he stands to God and Man; and when he sacrifices that original Revelation which the Almighty implanted in his Constitution, which is Reason, the Power of distinguishing Right from Wrong, to the false Pretensions of Men, he is guilty of Impiety against God, of Ingratitude to his Maker; and he that remains in that Cloud of Error, in which his Education wraped him, continues in the Incapacity of rendering himself so acceptable to God as otherwise he would be; and some Men, by their Education, are rendered entirely incapable of becoming acceptable to God; the Reason of which is plain, because Errors, such as imply the Necessity of Belief, generally lead Men to be prejudiced against other Persons who are not attached to the same Errors, and thereby destroy all the tender and social Ties
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which God, by his wise Providence, in the System of the World, intended as the Cement of human Society.

Hence we see the great Necessity of an extraordinary Care in the Education of Children; which, according to the Customs of Education over all the Christian World, and great Part of the World besides, is the Foundation of almost all Error. *Locke* * has judiciously observed that *the Ideas of Goblins and Spirits have really no more to do with Dark-ness than Light; yet let but a foolish Maid inculcate these often on the Mind of a Child, and raise them there together, possibly he shall never be able to separate them again so long as he lives, but Darkness shall ever afterwards bring with it those frightful Ideas, and they shall be so joined that he can no more bear the one than the other.* This is a woeful Truth; and therefore all Parents, as they must answer to their own Consciences, and to God, should take particular Care that their Children may not be instructed in Doctrines repugnant to the Attributes of the Deity; they should be careful, as soon as their Offsprings are capable of retaining Ideas, that they may not be taught to annex to the Word God the Idea of a Cerberus, or of any other monstrous Being, which has no Existence but in the weak and wicked Mind of Man; they should train them up with the

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* In his *Essay concerning human Understanding*, Book 2, Chap. 23, Sect. 10.

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Notions of a Being omnipotent, infinite in Wisdom and Goodness, whose Essence is not discoverable by us; they should likewise assure them that all Doctrines, under whatever Authority delivered, repugnant to these Attributes, are false, and therefore not of God. Let a Child be taught to annex to the Idea of God the Idea of a Being fickle, penitent, this Day angry, the next Day calm, now bleeding and dying like a Man, and afterwards rising again, let a Child, I say, be taught, from his Dawn of Knowledge, to annex these Ideas to a God, which Being, he is likewise taught, created all Worlds, and he will ever after, in all Likelihood, when he thinks of God, blend these confused Ideas together, which have no Connection with one another, to make one Being, which he will call God. Parents, who are sensible of these ill Consequences of a wrong Education, are, if they bring up their Children in it, guilty of a Crime which no Penitence can wash away: better for them and for their Children that they should remain ignorant of the Alphabet than, by knowing it, they should imbibe such Errors; for, if they are left to no other Guide but Nature, the Beauty of Virtue will appear unpolluted to them: and *Nature* will never mislead them to such monstrous Notions of *God*; but a wrong Education, that is an unnatural one, inconsistent with the Dictates of *Nature*, is the Foundation of the
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most pernicious Errors with which Mankind is possessed.

The Mind, like a *Tabula rasa*, easily receives the first Impression; and, like that, when the first Impression is deeply made, it with Difficulty admits of an Erasure of the first Characters, which in some Minds are indelible: my Intent therefore, in the following Discourses, is to expel those Ideas which arise from a bad Education, and to substitute, in Minds which are capable thereof, such as are consistent with the Attributes of God and the Appearances of Things.

The Reader will, I hope, observe that I have behaved with Impartiality towards those celebrated Authors which I have quoted in this Work, having acknowledged their Excellences, in such as have them, as well as exposed some of their Imperfections.

A
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
WILL of GOD
BY THE
LIGHT of NATURE.

DISCOURSE I.

An Enquiry into the Origin and Constitution of Man, the Powers of Matter, and the Being of God.

A VERY wise, and, if his Writings are sufficient Testimonys thereof, a very good Man has observed that
* *Men are not perplexed by Things themselves but by Opinions concerning Things.*
If this Remark is just, as I believe I shall make

* Ταράσσει τῆς Ανθρωπότης ὃ τὰ Πράγματα, ἀλλὰ τὰ περὶ τῶν Πραγμάτων Δογματά. *Epiſtet. Cap. 10.*

make it appear to be, I can not enter on a more useful Work than the Establishment of such Truths as will necessarily make Mankind easy in their Minds, and the Detection of such false Opinions as have, thro many Ages, preyed on the Souls of weak Persons, and which have been productive of Misery and Despair. Some of the Commentators of *Epicetus* have called the Sentence which I have here quoted a Paradox; but, if we confine it to speculative Doctrines in Religion, almost twenty Centuries are full of Instances of the Truth of it.

Philosophy, says *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus**, requires no more of us than *Nature* requires; and I will demonstrate, in these Discourses, that *God* requires no more of us than *Nature* requires. To pave the Way to the divine Truths which are the Subjects of my Enquiry, I must first shew what *Man* is, and what *God* is; after which I must find out what *Nature* requires of us as we stand related one to another, and what *Nature* tells us *God* requires of us as we stand related to him.

Before we can possibly attain to any just Notion of a God, we must examine into the Nature of our own Existence; which will lead us to some Knowledge of the Author of it, by discovering the Impossibility of our Existence, without owing the Original, and

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* Φιλοσοφία μὴ αὐτὴ ὡς ἡ Φύσις σου δεῖται. Lib. 6.

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Continuation, of it to the Will of an omnipotent Being.

Robault, in his System of natural Philosophy, gives this Proof of our own Existence, which I chuse to use in the Words of his *English* Translator: * *our natural Reason teaches us that Nothing can have no Properties, and that what thinks must exist: hence it is plain how we come by the Knowledge of our own Existence, for every Man must necessarily reason in this Manner; I think; that which thinks must of Necessity exist; therefore I exist.* Thus far *Robault*, from his great Master *Des Cartes*, and justly: and from this Proof of our Existence from our thinking I go on thus: I perceive myself a Being susceptible of Pleasure and of Pain; I likewise perceive the Capacity of enjoying Pleasure, and feeling Pain, to arise from the Nature of my Constitution in Body and Mind, and from the Nature of the Objects about me, which are conveyed to my Consideration by my Senses, and by which my Mind is at sundry Times differently affected. I find myself endowed with the Power of reasoning; by which I mean a Power that enables me to distinguish betwixt Right and Wrong, a Power that enables me to judge of the Truth of such Things as are reduceable to the Measure of human Judgement, and which likewise enables me to distinguish those Things, or Subjects, which are reduceable to the Measure

* *Dr. John Clarke. Part 1. Chap. 2.*

sure of human Judgement from those which *are not*: and no Man ever could, or can, give Proofs to another of his having any Power of judging besides that originally implanted in the human Constitution, whatever presumptuous Pretensions may have been, or may hereafter be, made to extraordinary Powers.

When I consider myself possessed of these Propertys, I am naturally led to an Enquiry into the Source of my Existence; that I was not myself the Author of it is plain from the Date of my Remembrance; for tho I can not exactly tell the Day in which the Force of Memory dawned within me, yet I certainly know that a long Tract of Time preceded that Day. I likewise know that *my* Father, *his* Father, and the whole Race of Ancestors which have been before me, had the same Indications of their owing their Existence to another: and if I could trace my Forefathers thro ten Millions on Millions of Years backwards, and then add to them as many Millions of Years as the Mind of Man can number, yet I can not conceive the Possibility of a Man ever having been without a Beginning. I feel that I am gradually moving to a State of Corruption, and I feel the Necessity of dayly Sustenance by Food, and nightly Reparation by Sleep, to keep off, as long a Space of Time as I can, the Hour of my Dissolution, the Hour in which I must cease to be the Being which I now am: I am certain also that all my Predecessors were such

corruptible Beings as I am, because they are all now dead; by which I mean they are not the Beings which they once were. Hence appears the Impossibility of a Man ever having been without a Beginning; for had a Man ever been without a Beginning, he must have been self-existing, and incorruptible. That Self-existence and Incorruption are inseparable may not be evident to every Person; I will therefore endeavour to demonstrate it before I proceed any farther. An active, thinking, self-existing, Being requires not the Assistance of any outward Objects to support his Existence; for by being self-existing, or eternal, he owes his Origin to none, nor is he indebted for the Continuance of his Existence to any one. Eternal Existence implies Incorruption, because, let us suppose the Possibility of an eternal Being, we can not entertain the Supposition without annexing numberless Millions of Years to our Idea of such a Being: to render this as clear as possible, let us suppose this whole Globe, of which we are Inhabitants, extended to a Level, and that Level wrote over close with Figures signifying one Number, and that Number multiplied by the same Number, and each Unit to signify a Million of Years: this Number of Years must we annex to our Idea of a self-existing Being, and when we have carried our Account so far backward, we are to begin again, and so on ad Infinitum: he therefore that could exist thro such numberless Millions of

of Years, as we must necessarily annex to our Idea of his eternal Existence, must exist without End as he existed without Beginning, because Incorruption must be a Property of his Existence, who had no Beginning.

If Mankind had a Beginning, which I think is apparent from the Arguments which I have already used, he owes it either to the Will of an omnipotent intelligent Being, or to the fortuitous Cooperation of the various Parts of Matter one on the other. To which of these two Causes shall I ascribe the Origin of Man? To that which seems most consistent with Reason, with the Nature of Things, according to Appearances: and here I invoke not, nor do I want, any supernatural Light to direct my Judgement; for I find an original Power, implanted in my Constitution, capable of bringing me to the Truth which I now seek.

I need not enter on all the mechanical Powers of Matter, which will hereafter appear to be but deputed Powers, to prove that passive * Matter can not produce Thought; for, if passive Matter could produce Thought, Thought must have been eternally essential to Matter, an inherent Quality in it, which no Power could have divested it of, and therefore Production would be an improper Expression for what is eternal. That the visible Part of
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* The Distinction betwixt the passive and active Principles is shewed in the fourth Discourse; and where I use the Word *Matter* hereafter in this Discourse I speak of the passive Principle, tho I add not the Word *passive*.

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Man is Matter is a self-evident Truth ; and that Man, constituted a thinking Being, as I find myself to be, had a Beginning I have already demonstrated ; therefore whether we fall into the ridiculous System of all Things being created from Nothing, or build on the more rational one of the Eternity of Matter, the Impossibility of Matter producing Thought, or Thought being essential to Matter, is the same in either System ; for, if all Things were created from Nothing, not only the Qualitys of Matter, but Matter itself, had a Beginning ; and if Matter is eternal, the Beginning of Mankind as a thinking Being is a Proof that Thought is not an inherent Quality of Matter. If Thought is not essential to Matter, let us examine into the Possibility, or Impossibility, of an unthinking Essence producing a thinking Essence. First I will suppose all the Parts of Matter to have been one inert Substance lying motionless in some Part of Space, or I will suppose various Parts of Matter lying in various Parts of Space inactive : in such a Condition, if it ever was in either of those Conditions, would Matter have eternally continued, if a Power superior to it had not given it Motion ; because if a stimulating Faculty had been inherent, it would have eternally operated, and never have suffered the Mass to have become totally inactive : but when we consider what universal Space is, we can have no Idea of Matter lying motionless in any Part of it, because all

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is Descent, and, no Impediment being under it, Matter would have been eternally descending, if not opposed by a Being which had the Power of Opposition. To set my Argument in the strongest Light, and at the same Time to grant the most favourable Concessions to such as imagine that the Origin of Mankind may possibly have been the Effect of the Cooperation of the various Parts of Matter one on the other, I will suppose Motion essential to Matter, and Matter to be the only Being in universal Space. Taking the Argument in this Light, I must suppose Matter either one compact Substance, or in separate Parts, at various Distances, in Space: if one compact Substance, we must suppose it descending with the most rapid Velocity till by the Heat, which was occasioned by the Rapidity of the Motion, the Motion was altered, and by wonderful and unaccountable Effects a fortuitous Regularity was produced, and a Part of Matter fixed in some Part of Space: if we suppose Matter originally situated in separate Parts, and at either equal, or unequal, Distances in Space, we must likewise suppose a rapid Descent of the various Parts of Matter; but, as Centric and Excentric existed not, we can not easily conceive the Manner of the Descent of the various Parts, or any Part, or the whole together, of Matter; however, in a void Space, eternally must have been the Descent of Matter, supposing Matter, gross passive Matter, to be
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the only Being in Space; what Absurditys therefore must we run into, if we suppose the various Parts of Matter to have had such Effects in their Descent, and in their Cooperation one on the other, as to produce a Regularity, and fix a Part of Matter in a systematical Order? And even granting the Possibility of such a wonderful Effect, what Sort of Cooperation of the various Parts of Matter one on the other can we conceive capable of producing afterwards living Creatures, and some possessed of rational Facultys? Here I will endeavour to demonstrate to those who are inclined to think that this World, and Mankind in it, may have been produced by the Cooperation of the Parts of Matter one on the other, some of the Absurditys and Difficultys which they must labour under in such a System. They must suppose, whatever Point of Time they fix on for the Date of Matter producing this System, that such a Number of what we call Years had preceded it as would more than fill this whole Globe if writ in one Number, and each Unit a Million: attend now to the Absurdity, in such a Doctrine, which arises from this Consideration; if any Rapidity of Motion, or any Kind of Cooperation of the Parts of Matter one on the other, could have produced such a Globe as this which we inhabit, it would have been produced long before it was, let us suppose it produced as many Millions of Years since as we can conceive; because in the Space

of Time (if I may properly talk of Time before any Beings were to measure Time, and of Space of Time when speaking of Eternity,) which preceded the Production of this Globe, the same Degrees of Rapidity, and the same Kinds of Cooperation, must have been repeated over and over: this is no difficult Conception to those who think justly of Eternity: another Difficulty attending this Doctrine is that of conceiving the Cohæsion of Bodys where there is no Centre to attract, and no Pressure of an Atmosphere.

Now let us suppose Matter in either of the Situations in which I have represented it, and maturely consider whether we can have any Idea of such a wonderful and unaccountable Cooperation of the various Parts of it, as could produce such a Globe as this, and the Inhabitants thereof, with all the Laws of Motion (in which those of Propagation are included) by which we see the vegetable, animal, and rational, Parts thereof act: could the Cooperation of the various Parts of Matter alone do this and more? Could it produce habitable Bodys in different Parts of Space which should be assistant to each other, as the cœlestial Bodys are to us? Let us suppose, which is absurd and ridiculous to suppose, that this Globe could have been produced by the Cooperation of Matter, may not the Inhabitants thereof say it was made for them, that without Beings which have Eyes to see and Ears to hear, which have Facultys
to

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to smell and taste, and to deliberate, the Beautys of this Globe would be as Nothing? What is the vernal Bloom of vegetables, what the Fragrancy of Spring, what the ripened Fruits, and other delightful Parts of the Seasons, without Eyes to see them, Nostrils to smell them, Mouths to eat them, and other Facultys to enjoy them according to their Kinds? They would be as if they had no Beings, they would be usefess: did the same Cooperation of Matter produce Animals to eat and drink, and a proper Menstruum in each fit for the Digestion of such and such Substances? And, above all, did Matter give, what it had not to give, a reasoning Mind? The various Kinds of Composition and Operation of Aids and Fluids, and Heat and Cold, may produce Effects which will seem wonderful to many, but can not produce what is not inherent in them, Thought.

Some will say, in Answer to what I have sayed of the Powers of Matter, that there ever was in Matter that *Fire of Nature*, as it has been often called, which actuates the whole: if by that *Fire of Nature*, as they call it, they mean that Power that disposes all Things in the various Forms and Orders in which they are thro the Universe, then that *Fire of Nature* is only a Name for God, and is what the *Stoics* wisely called the *active Principle*, by which the *passive Principle* or *passive Matter* is actuated: but of that more hereafter.

The Reader must now carry his Attention back to what is proposed as the chief End of these Discourses; which is to prove that *true Religion*, that *God*, requires no more of us than *Nature* requires; previous to which, I found myself under a Necessity to shew what *Man* is, and what *God* is. I have shewed *what* Man is; and I have discovered, by shewing the Impossibility of Man's Existence without an omnipotent Power, *that* God is; and *what* he is shall be the Subject of my next Enquiry.

DISCOURSE II.

A farther Enquiry into the Being of God, with a Discourse on his Attributes, and some Rules to distinguish Truth from Falsehood.

WHEN we have arrived to the Knowledge of what we should avoid, we may properly be say'd to be more than Half Way towards knowing what we should embrace: as therefore I have shew'd the Impossibility of Man's Existence without an omnipotent Power, the Result of that Discovery is the Certainty of the Being of a God: and now, having found out *that he is*, my Enquiry shall be into *what he is*.

An eminent Divine * of the last Century has asserted that *if God was to be try'd by the Judgement of Sense, he must cease to be God; for how, says he, can an infinite and spiritual Being be discern'd by the Judgement of Sense?* This Question is weak and inconclusive; for how can we come to any Knowledge of God but by the Judgement, or at least the Assistance, of the Senses? Tho the Substance or Essence of God, and the Mode of his Existence, are remote from our sensual Ideas, we can attain to an undoubted Knowledge of his Existence

* *Stillington*, in his *Orig. Sacr.* Book 3, C. 1.

Existence and Attributes by the Judgement of Sense; for by reasoning on Objects of Sense we are led to reason on what are commonly called intellectual Objects which are removed from our Sense; as, for Example, when we endeavour to find out the Being of God, who is an Object removed from our Senses, we see an Impossibility of those Objects of Sense which are about us existing, in the Order in which they are, without the Concurrence of an almighty Being; which is the only Way of proving the Existence of God; that is by proving the Impossibility of the contrary; and the Certainty of his Existence is as great from such a Demonstration, as if we could view the Substance of his Essence, and had Facultys to detect the Mode of his Existence and Operation in all his Works: therefore, whatever may be the Notions of feeble and sickly Minds, the *only* Way that leads to the Knowledge of God is a diligent and impartial Search into his Works by our rational Facultys: and this, in the Opinion of the Prelate whose Words I just before quoted, is the properest Manner of opposing Atheism: his Words are these: * *whatever is imagined to the contrary by Men of weak Understandings, the best Way to cure the World of Atheism is true Philosophy, or a Search into the Natures of Things*: this Search into the Natures of Things can not be made without the Judgement of Sense, or at least without the Assistance of those Organs

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* Orig. Sacr. Book 3. C. 1.

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of Sense which convey all the Objects of reasoning to the Mind.

We have discovered, from our own Existence, and from the Appearances of Things about us, *that God is*; and from the Manner of our own Existence, and the Existence of Things about us, we are certain that he is the Author of such Beings. As I have proved that Matter could not be in the diverse Forms and Orders in which it is, thro the Universe, without a Power to throw it into those Forms and Orders, we may be sure that Omnipotence is his Attribute; because, as he is the only intelligent self-existing Being, the whole Universe is subordinate to him, and consequently unable to oppose his Will: and no less than a Power omnipotent could give those Modes of Existence to Things, which we behold the various Parts of Matter about us to have.

In the Omnipotence of God all his Attributes are included. I am sensible that Wisdom and Goodness are not the necessary Consequences of limited Power; but, from what follows, they will appear to be the necessary Consequences of Omnipotence. Omnipotence means not only infinite Power to execute, but infinite Power or Wisdom to contrive; and that Being who could depute such Powers to passive Matter, as we see the various Parts of Matter endowed with, can see at one View all the Effects of those Powers which are derived from himself, and the Continuance

tinuance of which depends on himself: as therefore he is allpowerful in Wisdom and Action, he necessarily sees at one View what is proper to be done; and he as necessarily puts in Execution what is proper to be done as he necessarily sees the Fitness of the Action. When we have arrived to a certain Knowledge of his Omnipotence in Wisdom and Action; we are to suppose all those Parts of Nature which we can not account for, some of which may seem Evils to us, and some superfluous, to be necessary in the System of Creation, or the allwise Creator would not have suffered them to have been. When I think of a Monkey, or a Bear, I can not perceive how they answer any End in this System of Creation of which I am a Part; and when I reflect on the Miserys to which the best of Men are sometimes subjected, by concurring Accidents according to the Nature of Things, I am inclined to think that omnipotent Power could have framed a System of Creation in which his Creatures might not have been liable to such Miserys; but I conclude, in Respect to my God, that these Things are necessary, or they never would have been: after this Manner reasoned that excellent Man *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* *, when meditating on the Evils of human State, and on Death. We need not stop at our implicit Respect to the Wisdom and Goodness of the Deity in accounting for the Evils of

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* Book the 12th.

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human Life; but we may discover the Rectitude of such Evils, by reasoning thus: if all Causes were not productive of their particular Effects, or, in other Words, if particular Effects were not the necessary Consequences of particular Causes, the Justice of the Deity could not be asserted: for if any extraordinary Interposition should be made by God, in direct-Opposition to the Course of Nature, when any Act is going to be committed by one Man against another, or should God by a partial Mark of his Pleasure or Displeasure here be instrumental to an Act of Virtue in one Man, or to an Act of Vice in another, to one Man's Happyness, or to another's Misery, all our Title to Merit would be imaginary, it would be cut off by ascribing that to another, which should be our own voluntary Act to give us any Title to Merit or Reward. Thus we see the Accidents to which the righteous and unrighteous are alike subjected no Way inconsistent with the Goodness of God, but reasonably to be accounted for: and when I meet with any Thing in this System of Creation which I can not by Reason account for, I resolve it in the Wisdom and Justice of God, concluding that it would not be, if it was not proper to be: therefore when Dr. *Clarke* *, in Opposition to *Spinoza's* Doctrine of Necessity, asks *what absolute Necessity for just such a Number* of

* In his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*. Prop. 9.

of *Species of Animals*, he gives a fair Occasion for Triumph to the Followers of *Spinoza*, who may affirm that, if any one Species of Animals exists unnecessary in this System of Creation, God acted by Caprice when he created such a Species; and, if God does never act by Caprice, there is no Species but what answers some End in this System of Creation, tho we may not be able to penetrate entirely into the End which such a Creature answers. God, who is the *only intelligent* Being that necessarily exists, is necessarily omnipotent in Wisdom and in Action; and as he is infinitely wise he necessarily sees the Rectitude of Action in every Thing; and as he is allpowerful he is necessarily able to put in Execution what he sees necessary to be done; and, as he is infinitely wise in seeing the Rule of Right at one View, he is infinitely good: infinite Goodness is the natural Consequence of infinite Power and Wisdom; for he that is omnipotent can have Nothing to fear; and, as he has Nothing to fear, not to be good would be not to be wise, there being no Wisdom in not being good; as therefore he is infinitely good, he follows that Rectitude of Action which by his Wisdom he sees, and which by his Power he can pursue. God never pauses, like us Mortals, on a Work, but undertakes it because of the Propriety which, at one View, he sees in it: therefore whatever I behold in this Life, which I can not account for, I always con-

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clude it to be a necessary Effect of as necessary a Cause, and that it *should* be so, or God would not suffer it *to be so*; for Nothing that *is* would be, did not God think it fitter *to be* than *not to be*: hence it will appear to be no Impiety to assert that God is not free to chuse to do otherwise than he does, that all his Actions are Acts of Necessity: for if this World could have been made in a better Manner than it is God would have made it so; and if it was not more fit that it should be made than that it should not be made, God had never made it: if this is not eternal Truth, in Regard to all God's Actions, God does not consult the Propriety of Things; and if he does not consult the Propriety of Things, he is not an infinite wise and good Being: but that he does consult the Propriety of Things is certain; and he directs his Actions accordingly; therefore all God's Actions are necessary, or they would not be: but that Necessity, under which the Deity is to act, does by no Means affect human Liberty, as will appear in a future Discourse.

While, from a Certainty of the infinite Goodness, unerring Wisdom, and uncontrollable Power, of God, we learn to doubt not the Rectitude of those Things which we see and can not account for, we must not impiously credit such Reports as are repugnant to these Attributes and to the Glory of God. We see the Monkey, the Serpent, and the Toad, and dayly view the Sufferings of good
 I Men,

Men, and the Prosperity of the wicked ; we behold the Inhabitants of the Seas and Rivers breathing in that Element which would be Death to us, and we know that the Element which is Life to us is Death to them ; and by seeing all these we know that they are, and know them to be the natural Effects of proper Causes ; we know them to be not repugnant to the Nature of Things, nor to the Attributes of God. When we read and hear Relations of any Thing which we know not the Truth of, and which we can not by Reason account for, and which do not contradict the Attributes of God, we should neither give Credit to them, nor dispute the Truth of them, but leave them in the Uncertainty in which we found them : sometimes indeed the Character of the Relater gains Credit to a Story which would otherwise meet with Indifference : but when we are told of wonderworking Men, * performing Miracles contrary to the Nature of Things, to the known System of Creation, and of the Resurrection of others from the dead, and their

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Ascen-

* Such are the Stories concerning *Simon Magus*, and of *Peter* being plunged, all over, into a Cauldron of boiling Oil and coming out unhurt, and of his Grave heaving over him. These are related in the *Clementine Recognitions*, and by *Tertullian*, and other early Christian Writers. Besides these Fables, and those of *Mahomet*, and the Church of *Rome*, antient and modern ecclesiastic and other Legends afford more, which are equally surprising and false,

Ascension * into Heaven, the Reports destroy the Credit of the first Reporters in the Opinion of all reasonable Men; and when we are told of cruel, partial, penitent, fickle, suffering, and bleeding, Gods, the wise, the honest, and pious, Man is ready to weep for the Sins of the Impostors, while he smiles at the Credulity of weak Believers. In whatever Books, and by whatever Men, Tales of these Kinds are told, they should be regarded as impious and abominable Fictions, and derogatory from the Honour of God.

When we have arrived to the Knowledge of all that is comprehensible of God, let us sit down contented, and not idly seek farther after his Essence, and the Mode of his Existence, and his Manner of Operation in his Works; which are not to be discovered by us in the State in which we are; and, if ever they will be, they can not till our Facultys are greatly enlarged.

The Reader must always keep in View the End to which these Enquirys are made; which is to prove that *true Religion*, that *God*, requires no more of us than *Nature* requires. I have discovered what Man is, and what God is, that is as far as he is discoverable by us; and before I directly proceed to shew the Relation in which one Man stands to another,

* Such is the Account of *Romulus's* Ascension into Heaven, which is related by *Livy*; which we disbelieve, because we were never taught to believe it.

ther, I will demonstrate the Eternity of Matter, and search as far as Reason can carry me into the Nature of the human Soul, and the Origin of Evil, and explain the Ideas which we must annex to the Words *Providence*, and *Nature*, different from our Idea of *God*. Tho what I have already sayd may prove as a Clue to a sober and thinking Person to find out what is farther necessary, before we proceed to the moral Relation in which we stand to God and Man, yet a Demonstration of the Eternity of Matter, a Search into the Nature of the human Soul, and the Origin of Evil, and the proper Distinction betwixt *God*, *Providence*, and *Nature*, will prepare the Way so effectually to our Certainty of the moral Relation in which we stand to God and each other, that we shall have no Room to suspect ourselves defective in the Knowledge of any Part of our Duty towards God and Man, and shall consequently be inexcuseable if we prove defective in the Practice of what we know to be our Duty.

DISCOURSE III.

A Demonstration of the Eternity of Matter, with a Definition of infinite Space and finite Space, and a Distinction between the active and passive Principles of the Universe.

THE Eternity of Matter, which has long been a Subject of Dispute, and much opposed by such Men as are commonly called orthodox Divines, is, I think, as demonstrable as the Sum total of various Numbers by a true Addition of them ; but as several learned Men, among the Moderns, have opposed it with some Subtlety, these Enquiries will not, I believe, be thought unworthy the Attention of those who are inquisitive after natural and religious Truths.

In this, and indeed in every other, Enquiry, the Reader should divest himself of all Prejudices, and not resolve against any particular Doctrine, because some Men, who have been stigmatized with the Names of Atheists, have been Asserters of it; nor should he be
tenacious

tenacious of any Opinion because it happens to be ecclesiastical, and a common received one, nor attached to any great Names because the Writings of such Men have prevailed; our own Country has lately produced some few Men who have writ excellently on practical Religion and moral Obligations, and yet in the same Volumes have defended (God and themselves only know from what Motives) such Principles as, were they less popular, would be beneath the Dignity of human Nature to oppose.

I hope that I have sayed enough to gain the impartial Attention of Mankind; therefore I will proceed to my Demonstration of the Eternity of Matter.

Dr. Clarke has rightly observed * that *the only true Idea of a selfexistant, or necessarily existing, Being is the Idea of a Being, the Supposition of whose Nonexistence is an express Contradiction.* By this Rule, which the Author layed down to prove the Being of God, is the Eternity of Matter to be demonstrated; for, unless the Supposition of the Nonexistence of Matter can be proved to be no Contradiction, all that has been sayed, against the Eternity of it, is to no Purpose. Dr. Clarke, in the same Proposition, has indeed endeavoured to prove that such a Supposition implies no Contradiction: says he, *absolute Necessity is absolute Necessity every where alike; and*

* In his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God.* Prop. 3.

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and if it be no Impossibility for Matter to be absent from one Place, 'tis no Impossibility that Matter should be absent from any other Place, or from every Place. All this is Assertion, and no Proof, as will appear by what follows. That Matter may be absent from any one Place implies no Impossibility; because there is always Room in infinite Space to receive it; but that it should be absent from every Place implies an Impossibility: let us suppose a Map, or any other Thing, in a Room, there is certainly no Impossibility that it should be absent from any one Part of the Room, while there are so many Parts to receive it; but would not that Man be thought a weak or mad Man who should assert that it implies no Impossibility to say it may be absent from every Part of the Room without going out of the Room? This would be just the same with what Dr. *Clarke* asserts; for, tho Matter may be absent from any one Part, or more Parts, of Space, yet it can not be absent from every Part of Space, because there is no Possibility of going out of universal Space; and, if it is not out, it must be in.

Let us annex an infallible Meaning to the Words which we use, and we shall soon arrive to a clear Demonstration of what I here endeavour to prove. I will first define universal Space in the best Manner I can, as a necessary Step towards what I am proving.

Univer-

Universal Space is without Bounds, and consequently without a Centre; for if we suppose ourselves to be ten Millions of Miles in Space, either to the right or left, above or below, from the Place in which we now are, the Distance from us, to the right and left, above and below, is equally the same: we can, in Speculation, journey ten Millions of Miles to the right, and as many to the left, and so ad Infinitum to an equal Distance on each Side; and this Supposition of equal Distance, from the right and left, above and below, may be justly made in whatever Part of universal Space we are situated: by Distance I do not mean that an ultimate Distance, either Way, is ever to be reached, but that the same Distance which can be measured to the right can be measured to the left, and the same below as above, in whatever Part of universal Space we are situated, and ad Infinitum in Space and Time. Sir *Isaac Newton*, Dr. *Clarke*, and some other eminent Men, have called Space a Body; but they might as properly have called a Vacuum a Plenum. By Space we mean that which is capable of containing Body, and which will admit of an entire Absence of all Body; which is true of every Part of universal Space considered separately, tho universal Space itself will not admit of an entire Absence of all Body; therefore that Space in which Body is contained can no more properly be called Body than

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than a Vacuum can in which is an entire Absence of all Body; for finite Space is the Mensuration, or rather Termination, of the Length, Breadth, and Thickness, of Body contained in a particular Part of universal Space; and it is likewise the Mensuration, or Termination, of a Vacuum which is the Distance betwixt particular Bodys: Space may be briefly called the Termination of Distance.

Now the Meaning of infinite Space and finite Space is as clearly represented as it can be, let us examine our Conceptions, and try if we can frame an Idea of one Being, in any Part of Time, calling another to Existence which had no Mode of Existence before that Part of Time. This active Being himself must fill some Part of Space; for the Supposition of the contrary, with the Supposition of his creating all Things from Nothing, destroys all Manner of Ideas, not only of such a Being, but of Existence itself; and makes universal Space an universal Vacuum, by an Absence of all Bodys. This is a Supposition too monstrous to dwell upon. The next Light in which this Argument is to be taken is that in which we must suppose God to be a Being which fills some Part of Space. Now let us try, as I sayed before, if we can frame an Idea of any Being, in any Part of Time, calling another to Existence which had no Existence before that Part of Time.

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If a Being is called to Existence it must be called to fill some Part of Space; and that Part of Space must before have been filled, or have been a Vacuum; if it was filled before, it must have been filled by a Being not God, or by God or Part of God, if by a Being not God, then Matter existed which was not God, and was removed to make Room for this new Being; and if it was before filled with God or Part of God, then God contracted or withdrew himself to make Room for this new created Being; and if the Part of Space which the new created Being filled as soon as it was called to Existence was a Vacuum, the same Idea of that Vacuum, in which was an entire Absence of all Body, will convince us of the Impossibility of any Substance being called from such another Vacuum, in which was an Absence of all Body likewise. The Idea of an active Being calling other Beings into Form and Action can not be conceived without the Idea of a passive Being to be worked upon: therefore whoever talks of one Being creating another out of Nothing talks of what no Man can annex any other Idea to but an Idea of a nonsensical Supposition. When we consider universal Space, we know that Nothing can be called from beyond what has no Bounds; and if any Thing is called to exist here or there, it had an Existence in some other Place before, tho not in the
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the same Form: we know that universal Space consists of innumerable Parts, some filled and some empty; from a Vacuum we know that Nothing can be called, and in a Vacuum we know that Nothing can exist; all therefore that does now exist *did* ever fill some Part of Space, and *will* ever fill some Part of Space; for which Reasons all the visible material Worlds are Parts of God, or have existed in their Substance, tho not in their Modes of Existence, from Eternity, and not Parts of God.

The Existence of the various Parts of Matter in the Forms in which we see them, and particularly the human Constitution, are Proofs, as I have before demonstrated, of the Existence of God and his Attributes; and the Arguments which I have here used are Proofs of the Eternity of Matter; and infinite Duration and Perfection, being the Attributes of God, are Demonstrations of the Parts of Matter, which we behold, not being Parts of God. The Manner in which God pervades all Parts of Space, according to his Will, is among the Parts of Knowledge which God has not given us Facultys to attain to; and those Parts of Knowledge which we have not Facultys to attain to are not proper Subjects of our Enquiry: therefore Dr. *Clarke* runs into inextricable Difficultys where he says
** whatever is selfexistent must of Necessity exist
 abso-*

* In his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*. Prop. 6.

absolutely in every Place alike, and be equally present every where. Matter I have proved to be selfexistent, and yet it is not *in every Place alike*, nor is it *present every-where*. This learned Divine denies Matter to be selfexistent, and applies the Passage which I last quoted to the Deity: let us examine into the Consequences of this Assertion. If God *must be equally present every where*, he fills all Parts of Space; for by *every-where* he must mean all Parts of Space; and, if he fills all Parts of Space, what fills all Parts of Space must be God: this World fills some Part of Space, this World is therefore, according to his Manner of reasoning, Part of God; I fill a Part of Space, I therefore am a Part of God; and the Serpent and the Toad are, on the same Hypothesis, Parts of God: moreover, if God fills any Part of Space, and *exists absolutely in every Place alike*, there can be no Vacuum; and a Vacuum the Doctor asserts * to be *abundantly demonstrated by Sir Isaac Newton*. This one Assertion, of God being *equally present every-where*, destroys a Vacuum, and confirms all that *Spinoza* has affirmed of the Sameness of God and the Universe: I am speaking of the Doctrine of God filling all Parts of Space with his Essence. *Spinoza* says, † *besides God no Substance can be given*

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* Prop. 3. † *Præter Deum nulla dari, neque concipi, potest Substantia.* This Passage is quoted by Dr. Clarke.

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or conceived; and if he fills all Parts of Space with his Essence, as there can be no other Substance but what is in Space, all that is in Space is God; which the Doctor affirms by saying God is *absolutely in every Place alike*. By this one Position this truly learned and greatly discerning Man directly contradicts a former Assertion, and involuntarily makes such a Concession as confirms a Doctrine which he rigourously endeavoured to oppose. How are these Extremes to be avoided? By calling in the two Principles of Creation as layed down by some of the Antients, the active Principle * which is the eternal and omnipotent Power whom we call God, the Mode of whose Existence we have not Facultys to discover, and the passive which is the visible material World. If Dr. Clarke's Meaning, when he sayed God *exists absolutely in every Place alike*, was that he presides absolutely over every Place alike, that is over the Universe, he should have expressed himself in such a Manner as would have admitted no other Construction; but he had a greater Latitude in his Meaning as well as in his Expression; for when he sayed that *he exists absolutely in every Place alike* he alluded to his Essence; and so every Thing, as I observed before, that fills a Part of Space is Part of God;

* Which is judiciously called *the superior Excellence of the Universe* in Cicero's Treatise of the Nature of the Gods.

God; and, if so, every Thing is Part of the Essence of God; which is a Doctrine too repugnant to the visible Attributes of God to be true.

Dr. *Clarke*, and most of our eminent Divines, have affirmed the Eternity of Matter to be repugnant to all the Attributes of God. Bishop *Stillingfleet* * has laboured this Point in a very extraordinary Manner, but so unlike a Philosopher or Logician, that if I should produce any of his Arguments in Order to examine them, I should act like one that throws a Heap of Rubbish into a Room only to shew his Power to sweep it out again. A Demonstration of the Impossibility of the Nonexistence of Matter is a Demonstration of the Eternity of it; and when such a Proof is made by rational and infallible Deductions, we should not raise Scruples and supposed Inconsistencies against Facts: if from a Vacuum, that is from a Part of Space where is an entire Absence of Body, no Substance can come, all Matter that now exists ever did exist; and if all the Parts of Matter which are now in Order and Motion, and possessed of Thought, could not so exist without the Concurrence of an intelligent and almighty Being, that intelligent and almighty Being ever did and ever will exist; nor can that almighty Being annihilate what is not to be annihilated any

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* *Orig. Sacr.* Book 3. Chap. 2.

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more than eternal Matter can make him otherwise than he is; he indeed *will* ever be the perfect Being that he is; and all the Parts of Matter *can* be in no Forms but such as he thinks fit to cast them into. We must not, to give an Addition of false Glory to God, fall on irreconcilable Absurditys: we add not to his Honour by saying that he did what is impossible for even Omnipotence to do, by saying that he created all Things from Nothing, that is by saying he called the whole Mass of Matter from a Vacuum where was an Absence of all Matter; nor is it any Diminution of his Glory to say that Matter is selfexistent and eternal, without Action being essential to it, and that he has an eternal despotic Power over it, tho we can not comprehend the Manner in which he can dilate and contract Matter, nor the Modes of his other Operations, nor the Mode of his own Existence, nor how he pervades, according to his Will, universal Space. Matter ever was and ever will be Matter, and God ever had, and ever will have the despotic Power over it: and it implys no Contradiction to affirm that God may ever have been in the Act of Creation, of continuing Systems which he made by the Laws of Motion layed down by him, and of destroying others by the Laws of Motion likewise. As the learned Prelate, whom I before named, has well obser-

observed * the greatest Evidence we can have of the Truth of a Thing is a clear and distinct Perception of it in our Minds; for otherwise the rational Faculties of Man's Soul would be useless, as being not fitted for any End, if upon a right Use of them Men were still liable to be deceived. A Man may reasonably wonder how the same Author could utter so undeniable a Truth as this is, and in the same Book attempt to prove what no Man can have a clear Idea of, but, quite contrary, what is repugnant to the pure Dictates of Nature, and the perfect rational Facultys.

The Reader, as I have sayed before, must all along keep in View the End to which these Enquirys are made; which is to prove that *true Religion*, that *God*, requires no more of us than *Nature* requires. I have shewed what Man is, and what God is, that is what is comprehensible of God; and I have proved the Eternity of Matter; and as Matter itself, divested of all the deputed Powers which we see in the several Parts of it, is an inert passive Substance, without Thought or Motion being essential to it, we may naturally infer that in those Parts of Matter in which Reason resides, in which are Facultys to distinguish Right from Wrong, something exists which is superior

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* In his *Orig. Sacr.* Book 3. Chap. 1.

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to gross inactive Matter, tho we can not tell of what Substance it is, nor how capable of being contracted or dilated; which Consideration leads me to my next Enquiry, which is into the Nature of the human Soul.

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DISCOURSE IV.

An Enquiry into the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State, and into the Doctrine of Immateriality, with a farther Distinction betwixt the active and passive Principles, and an Examination into the human Senses, and into the Difference betwixt the Souls of Men and Beasts, with some Observations on Dreams.

THE Persons who have, in all Ages, been byassed by their Hopes and Fears in the Belief or Disbelief of the Immortality of the Soul and a future State, are much greater in Number than those who have embraced, or dissented from, this Doctrine thro a philosophical Conviction in their own Minds. Some great and good Men have cherished it, being enchanted with the delightful Prospect of an Hereafter. *If I err,*

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says Tully *, *in the Belief of the Immortality of the Souls of Men, I err willingly; nor do I wish to be freed from this Error, which adds to the Pleasure of my Life.* Many from a pungent Consciousness of their Crimes have almost worked themselves into a Belief of the Mortality of the Soul, as the only Relief, and that a gloomy one, in their Hours of Reflection: and some have a more dreadful Apprehension of an eternal Stupidity than of Damnation itself, so fond are they of Existence in any Condition: and several Men, who have no great Crimes to accuse themselves of, are, from a pusillanimous Constitution, so divided betwixt their Hopes and Fears that they live in continual Doubt, and not having Capacity, or Inclination, to assist themselves with the Force of Reason, hourly anticipate the Horrors of Death. According as these two Passions have predominated in their Minds, some Men have been induced to fix a Dependance on the Promises which their fellow Creatures have made, in the Name of God, of a future State; and some, being educated in a particular Belief, rest in the Doctrines which they have been taught from their Youth, and, from an Imbecility or Indolence of Mind, are unable to make any natural Enquiries towards confirming the Truth,

* Si in hoc erro, quod Animos Hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro; nec mihi hunc Errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo. *De Senectute.*

Truth, or detecting the Falsehoods, of such Doctrines; but a Promise made by Men, tho promulged under the awful Name of the Deity, is no more a Confirmation of the Immortality of the Soul than is our Hope or Fear: and if the Immortality of the Soul has no better a Foundation than on our Hopes or Fears, or on the Promises of Mortals presumptuously made in the Name of the supreme Being, it has no Foundation; for if a Number of Men, under the Denominations of Priests and Prophets, should in any Age affirm that they were authorised by God to annex future Rewards to Virtue, those Promises can not make an Expectation of a future State more reasonable or certain than it was before. Is a future State more certain, as some Authors * have seemed to imagine it to be, because we find it promised in the Writings of particular Men? No: if a Proof therefore can not be deduced from rational Enquirys, no Demonstration can be had.

My Intent here is not to enter on an Examination into the various Sentiments of the Antients on this Subject; but my Design is to shew that those Christian Writers who have founded their Arguments, for the Immortality of the Soul and a future State, on the Promises of Men, whose Authority is dayly the Subject of Dispute, have substituted
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* See *Clarke's Discourse concerning the Certainty of the Christian Revelation*. Prop. II.

in the Room of Reason chimerical Hypotheses and Suppositions, and neglected the Book of Nature which lay before them, and which affords all the Demonstration that can possibly be had.

Dr. *Clarke* has gone farther than any other Christian Divine towards a Demonstration of a future State; but, as he is not without his Perplexitys, I shall endeavour to remove those Difficultys which he has throwed in the Way, and which are real Obstructions to these Enquirys. One of the most considerable, and at the same Time fruitless, Distinctions which this eminent Man makes is betwixt immaterial and material Substances. His Words are these: * *The only Thing that remains to be proved is this, that immaterial Substances are not impossible, or, that a Substance immaterial is not a contradictory Notion: whoever asserts that it is contradictory must affirm that whatever is not Matter is Nothing, and that to say any Thing exists which is not Matter is saying that there exists something which is Nothing: which in other Words is plainly this, that whatever we have no Idea of is Nothing, and impossible to be: for there is no other Way to reduce immaterial Substance to a Contradiction, but by supposing immaterial to signify the same as having no Existence; and there is no possible Way to prove that, but by saying*

* In his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*. Prop. 10.

saying we have no Idea of it, and therefore it neither has nor can have any Existence: by which same Argument (even supposing it true, which yet is indeed most false, that we have a clear Idea of the Essence of Matter, and none at all of any immaterial Substance) a Man born blind may demonstrate irrefragably that Light or Colour is an impossible and contradictory Notion, because it is not a Sound or Smell: for the Power of seeing Light or Colour is to a Man born blind altogether as incomprehensible, and absolutely beyond the Reach of all his Ideas, as either the Operations or Perceptions, or even the simple Essence, of a pure immaterial Substance or Spirit can be to any of us. This short Paragraph abounds with false Distinctions, unjust Inferences, and dissimilar Parallels; and since the Subject is of great Importance, and Dr. Clarke's Authority very prevalent, I can not avoid a Confutation of these Errors. The Doctor says *there is no other Way to reduce immaterial Substance to a Contradiction, but by supposing immaterial to signify the same as having no Existence*; and this is the true Way of reducing what he calls *immaterial Substance to a Contradiction*; for, if by what is *material* we mean what fills a Part of Space, and no other Meaning can be annexed to the Word, *immaterial* must carry a Meaning repugnant to *material*, that is *Nothing*: this sagacious Writer therefore unjustly infers that they, who
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would reduce what he calls immaterial Substance to a Contradiction, say *in other Words that whatever we have no Idea of is Nothing, and impossible to be*; for saying what is not Matter is Nothing is not the same as if we should say what we have no Idea of is Nothing. If we mean by *Matter* what fills a Part of Space, and the same Meaning must be annexed to the Word *Substance*, by a Word repugnant to that Meaning, as *Immateriality* is, we must mean Nonexistence; but tho we have no Idea of the Essence of God, and the Soul of Man, yet we do not say they are Nothing; for, having proved that passive Matter could not exist as Man does without a supreme Power, we have proved the Existence of God and the Soul of Man, tho we can not say what their Essences are. The next Mistake, and which is as flagrant as this, is what the Doctor asserts of a Man born blind. A blind Man knows that he lives among Beings who can see, and that he is an imperfect Being among his own Species, and therefore can not presume to judge of those Things which are to be tryed by that Faculty which he has not; therefore *the Power of seeing is not to a Man born blind*, as Dr. Clarke affirms it to be, *altogether as incomprehensible, and absolutely beyond the Reach of all his Ideas, as either the Operations and Perceptions, or even the simple Essence, of a pure immaterial Substance, or Spirit, is to any*

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of us; for we do not live among Beings, who have a perfect Notion of Immateriality, or, I should say, who have Facultys to distinguish Immateriality, which we have not, and the Want of which renders us imperfect among our Species. A Man that is born blind can never have an adequate Idea of what seeing is; but he may be made sensible of the Use of seeing in a great Degree. Should any Man, who can see, lead a Man born blind to any particular Place, several Miles distant from the Place where he was, he would give the blind Man a Proof of his having a Faculty which the blind Man wants, and that he by the Direction of his Eyes could do what the blind Man could not do without them; from which the blind Man would infer that Light is something which enables Mankind to walk to any Place, not impervious, by the Direction of the Eye; which is having some Notion of the Use of Light, tho not an adequate Idea of it: and he has dayly Conviction of the Use of Light and Sight by being supplied by those who can see with the Necessarys of Life, which he would be unable to produce for himself. Thus I think I have proved that the Doctor has endeavoured to make a Parallel where is none; but he, in the same Proposition, pursuing his Argument, with the Assurance of being right, says *since 'tis possible there may be such Things as immaterial Substances, and since, if any such*

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*such Substance can be, there is all the Reason in the World to believe that Consciousness, and thinking Substance, is such, these Propertyts being the most remote from the known Propertyts of Matter that are to be conceived, the Foundation of all the Objections against the Immateriality of the Soul is entirely taken away. Since I have shewed the Absurdity of talking of immaterial Substances, I need not take any Pains to contradict this last Passage from Dr. Clarke: but if, instead of what he calls immaterial Substances, we substitute what some of the Antients wisely called the *active Principle*, and annex to that *active Principle* the same Idea which the Doctor confusedly strives to annex to *immaterial Substance*, and when we speak of *passive Matter*, let us mean the same that those Antients intended by the *passive Principle*, all Confusion will be avoided; for when we speak of the *active Principle* as something that really exists and fills a Part of Space, without which Meaning we mean Nothing, we need not attempt to define what that *active Principle* is, how it can be dilated, or how contracted, for the Essence thereof is among the Secrets of Nature which we have not Facultys to discover. Let these two Principles stand in the Sense in which I have here placed them, and what Dr. Clarke asserts, in the same Proposition, is certainly true: *others, says he, contend that God, by his almighty and supreme Power, indues certain**

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Systems

Systems of Matter with a Faculty of thinking, according to his own good Pleasure: but this amounts to Nothing: for either our Idea of Matter (that is passive Matter) is a true Idea, or it is not: if it be a true Idea that (passive) Matter is Nothing but a solid Substance, capable only of Division, Figure, and Motion, with the Effects of their several Compositions, as it appears to us, upon the best Examination we are able to make of it, then it is absolutely impossible for thinking to belong to (passive) Matter, because thinking can not possibly arise from any Modification or Composition of any or all of these Qualities. To illustrate what Dr. Clarke has here advanced, I will enter on an Examination into the Organs of our Senses.

When I consider the Senses of Man, I am convinced in my own Mind that the Organs of those Senses are insensible of their Faculties; they perform their Functions which God allotted them, but the *Mind* only enjoys them, and laments the Loss of them. To render what I mean clear, I will be particular.

The *Eye* sees, but the *Eye* knows not what it sees; the *Mind* indeed knows that such a Member as the *Eye* conveys Objects to it with which it is delighted, and on which it may reflect. The *Eye* neither enjoys, nor reflects on, the Objects; and if the *Eye* is deprived of the Power of seeing, the *Eye* is not sensible of the Loss of the Sight of external

ternal Objects; the *Mind*, the *Ens rationalis*, is what bewails the Loss, because it is deprived of the Pleasure which it received from that Organ of Sense the *Eye*. Let us suppose a Man enamoured with a beautiful Woman, and struck blind soon after the Birth of his Passion, and the Object of his Love gone from him, and never more to approach him: behold him sighing in Darkness for that Blaze of Beauty which overcame him when he was capable of gazing on her: the *Mind* is wounded, and not the *Eye* thro which the Arrow passed.

If the *Ear* is deprived of the Power of hearing, the *Ear* itself knows not the Loss; but the *Mind* is sensible of it. It is not the *Ear* that it inclined to hear a fine Voice, the Melody of the Lute, or any excellent Piece of Music, but the *Mind* which receives the Pleasure of Sounds thro the *Ear*; for if the *Ear* is deprived of the Power of hearing, the *Mind* which had before a refined Taste for Music has often the same Desires which it had before, tho it has loss'd that Organ of Sense which before conveyed delightful Sounds to it.

The *Nostril* smells, but that Part of the corporeal Frame called the *Nostril* knows not that it smells; but the *Mind* enjoys the Scent, and feels any Impediment that happens to that Organ of Sense. If the *Pallate* can relish no Meats or Liquors, the *Pallate* knows
not

not its own Defect, the *Mind* is the Sufferer; and the Food which we eat, and the Liquor which we drink, would contribute as much to the Nutriment of our Bodys, tho we could neither taste nor smell, as if the *Pallate* had the Power of tasting and smelling in Perfection; but the *Mind* would not enjoy the same Pleasure as if, by the *Pallate*, it could distinguish a Trout from a red Herring, or *Cyprus* Wine from Crabjuice.

From these Enquirys an Essence appears to be in the human Constitution superior to the Senses, and to which the Senses are subservient; but we can have no Idea of the Manner in which it operates in every Particular, how it is communicated in the Seed of Man at the Time of the Enjoyment of the Sexes, nor after what Manner it departs at the Time of the Cessation of the animal Functions. When we have lost the Powers of seeing, hearing, and feeling, we cease to be Men, and then the corporeal Frame is Nothing more than passive Matter in the Figure of a Man; from which we are certain that we can have no innate Ideas as Men, no Ideas but what are conveyed to us originally thro the Organs of Sense; because Death closes the Avenues thro which all Objects passed to the Mind: but this Certainty can not destroy another Certainty, the Certainty of an Essence residing in Man superior to the Senses; into what that Essence is resolved,

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after

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after the Separation thereof from the present visible corporeal Frame, whether it mixes with the general Life of the World, the active Principle of the Universe, or whether it takes its Flight into another Sphere by some Laws of Motion natural to it but out of the Bounds of our present Knowledge, and whether it exists there awhile, and is to make future Migrations, are Facts which do not appear to us in this State, and are no Subjects of our Enquiry. The Difficulty of conceiving how Souls can exist after the Death of Men led *Pliny* into the following Questions*. *What is the Essence of the Mind by itself? What is the Matter of which it is composed? Where does the Faculty of thinking reside? How is Vision conveyed to it? How Hearing? Who feels it? What is the Use of it? What Advantage has it without the Organs of Sense?* † The only Answer which

* Dr. Clarke quotes the following Words of *Pliny* in his *Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of natural Religion*, &c. Prop. 4. *Quod autem Corpus Animi per se? Quæ Materia? Ubi Cogitatio illi? Quomodo Visus? Auditus? Aut qui tangit? Qui Usus est? Aut quod sine his Bonum?* *Plin. Lib. 7.*

† *Pliny* here seems to have had the third Book of *Lucretius* in his Eye, where, on the *Epicurean* System, he endeavours to prove that the Soul is born, grows up, sickens, recovers, becomes old, decays, and perishes, with the Body.

Nunc age, nativos Animantibus et mortaleis
Esse Animos, Animasque leves, ut noscere possis.

And in the first Book the same Poet lays it down as certain that Nothing but Body is tangible,

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which is necessary to these Questions is, *I know not*. The preceding Arguments are a Proof of an Essence being in the human Composition superior to the Senses; and the Impossibility of answering these Questions can never overthrow that Certainty.

Some perhaps will say that the Arguments which I have used, of the Senses being subservient to an Essence superior to them, are applicable, in a great Degree, to Brutes as well as to Men. Supposing those Arguments may be as justly applyed to Brutes, they are not less valid than if they were not applicable to them; and I am sure that no Man of a sound Understanding would think himself injured, or be displeased, if a Horse or a Dog could be proved to have an immortal * Soul: but I

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believe

Tangere enim et tangi, nisi Corpus, nulla potest Res.

Which is undeniable, whatever wrong Inferences some may make from it.

* The Reader must observe how the Words *Soul* and *Mind* are used synonymously in this Discourse for the rational Essence. The *Greeks* often used the Words Νῦς and Ψυχή as synonymous for the rational Essence, tho Instances may be produced of Ψυχή and Ζωή being used in one Sense. The *Latins* generally distinguished betwixt the Words *Anima* and *Animus* or *Mens*: *Anima* they rendered as applicable to Beasts as to Men, meaning the same as *Vita*, as in the 15th Satire of *Juvenal*,

Sensum a cœlesti demissum traximus Arce,
Cujus egent prona et Terram Spectantia : Mundi
Principio indulsit communis Conditor illis
Tantum *Animas*, nobis *Animum* quoque.

Examples of this Distinction appear in other Quotations in this Discourse.

believe if we make a strict Enquiry into the Motives of human Actions, I mean the Actions of such Men as make the Rule of Right their Rule of Conduct, and into the Motives of the Actions of Brutes, we shall find as wide a Difference betwixt them as betwixt the latter and a common Machine made by the Hands of Men; nor need I confine myself, in the Comparison, to the Motives of the Actions of such Men as make the Rule of Right their Rule of Conduct, for they who depart from the Rule of Right are seldom without Selfcondemnation; which is a Proof of their acting against the Dictates of their Conscience. That Persuasion of Mind which arises from a Capacity of distinguishing Right from Wrong, or from a Belief of having a Capacity to distinguish Truth from Falsehood, in Action or Speculation, always makes a Man easy or uneasy, according as he has obeyed, or rebelled against, such a Persuasion of Mind; and such a Persuasion of Mind is what we call Conscience. Several of the Antients have elegantly distinguished betwixt the Operations of the human Mind and the Operations of the Senses of Brutes. Says Tully *the Desire of Coition and the Care of their Offsprings are common to all Animals for the Sake of Generation*; and there is great Evidence of the Wisdom of God in the Means of Propagation: Men are not always stimulated, and Brutes never, to Copulation thro a Desire of propagating

gating their Species, but by the Joys which they propose in the Action, and by the thrilling Pains which they feel in the Moments of hot Desire, and which can not be eased but by Emission. These are generally the Motives to Coition; God therefore has shewed Abundance of Wisdom in making what most Animals esteem the most exquisite Pleasure the Means of Propagation: at the same Time that I say these are generally the Motives to Coition, I do not doubt but some few Men have a greater Satisfaction in all their Actions because they know that they are discharging their Duty than in the sensual Enjoyment which they possess in any of their Actions. I would not be thought here to imagine that a Man can not indulge the Desire of Coition according to the Rule of Right without having Generation always in View; for I know that a Man may; but the Object and Circumstances are to be considered, and the Rule of Right should be the Rule of Conduct in this as in other Actions. *Tully*, immediately after what he says of Coition, thus judiciously states the Difference betwixt Man and Beasts: * *the latter is moved only by Sense, and*

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accom-

* *Commune Animantium omnium est Conjunctionis Appetitus, procreandi Causâ, et Cura quædam eorum quæ procreata sunt: sed inter Hominem et Beluam hoc maxime interest, quod hæc tantum, quantum Sensu movetur, ad id solum, quod adest, quodque præsens est, se accommodat: Homo autem, quod Rationis est Particeps,*
per

accommodates himself only to what is present; but Man, because he is possessed of Reason by which he looks into Consequences, sees the Causes of Things and their Progress, and, as not being ignorant of what is passed, compares Circumstances, and casts his Eye into Futurity, in Order to judge of what is proper. Afterwards, in the same Book, he well observes that the Power of enquiring into Truth is the principal Property of Man: and farther in the same Book he has this excellent Remark, * that we differ in Nothing more from the Nature of Beasts than in our Characteristics: we often say a Horse, or a Lion, is strong; but we do not call either of them just, equitable, or good: which wide Difference betwixt the Constitution of the human Mind and the Instinct of Beasts Quintilian has placed in a beautiful Light: Reason †, says that great Judge

per quam Consequentia cernit, Causas Rerum videt, earumque Progressus, et, quasi Antecessiones non ignorat, Similitudines comparat, et Rebus præsentibus adjungit et annectit futuras.—In primisque Homini est propria Veri Inquisitio atque Investigatio. *De Offic. Lib. i.*

* Neque ulla Re longius absumus a Naturâ Ferarum, in quibus inesse Fortitudinem sæpe dicimus, ut in Equis, in Leonibus; Justitiam, Æquitatem, Bonitatem, non dicimus.

† *Naturalis est Homini Ratio*: sicut Aves ad Volatum, Equi ad Cursum, ad Sævitiâ Feræ, gignuntur, ita nobis propria est Agitatio Mentis, atque Solertia, unde Origo Animi cœlestis creditur: Hebetes vero, et indociles, non magis secundum Naturam eduntur quam prodigiosa Corpora et Monstris insignia. *Institut. Orat. Lib. i.*

Judge of Eloquence and Wisdom, is natural to Man: as Birds by Nature fly, as the Steed is rapid in the Race, and as Savages are fierce and cruel, so Thought and Wisdom are proper to us, wherefore the Origin of the Mind is believed to be *cælestial*: but Blockheads, and Fools incapable of Instruction, are no more according to Nature than monstrous and prodigious Bodys. Quintilian here seems to think that irrational Men are Excrescencys of Nature, and not above Brutes, tho in the Forms of Men; and Tully, more than once in his Writings, has discovered his Sentiments of the irrational Part of Mankind to be the same. The Difference is certainly very great betwixt those Creatures whose Actions all proceed from the immediate Impulse of Sense only, without a Capacity to act otherwise, and those whose Actions are the Fruits of Deliberation.

As I have elsewhere observed, if we can reduce any Doctrine to a Contradiction, that is a Proof of the Truth of the contrary; and that the Operation of the human Mind can not be the Effect of any, or all, the Qualitys of passive Matter, is evident from the preceding Arguments. I here refer the Reader backward to my * *Enquiry into the Origin and Constitution of Man, the Powers of Matter, and the Being of God*, in which he will find what is farther necessary to be sayed here of the Qualitys of passive Matter, and the Im-

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possibility

* Discourse the 1st.

possibility of a thinking Essence proceeding from any of, or all, those Qualitys.

I will here add one Proof more of an Essence in the Composition of Man superior to the Senses, and that founded on Dreams. When I dream of being in some delightful Sylvan Scene, (and a Dream similar to such an one most Men have had,) with a Prospect as beautiful as my Ideas can frame, and the most elegant Music to charm my Ear, with many other Objects of Pleasure, I know when I awake from such a Dream that my Eyes and Ears neither saw nor heard the Objects which were represented to me in my Dream; that Organ of Sense called the Eye was closed, and could not have beheld those Scenes had I been really in them; but none of the Objects which I enjoyed in my Dream were present; therefore my Organs of Sense, if they had not been closed, could not have conveyed those Objects really to my Mind, which were not within their Reach, and which perhaps had no Existence in the Order in which I saw them in my Dream; I am certain therefore that something in my Composition, which is neither Eye, nor Ear, represented them to me; the *Mind*, without the immediate organical Assistance of the Body, represented those Objects to itself. After what Manner the *Mind* operates, when the Organs of Sense are closed, is not a Subject of my Enquiry; for if I could discover the
Manner

Manner in which it operates, we could not have a greater Proof than we have of an Essence superior to the Senses representing Objects to itself without the immediate Assistance of those Senses; nor does the Confusion in which those Visions are often represented by Dreams destroy the Certainty of the Existence of that Essence which represents them without the immediate organical Assistance of the Senses; that Confusion, with some other Circumstances relating to Dreams, I could, in a great Measure, physically account for; but that is an Enquiry unnecessary here. From the Observations which we make on Beasts we discover some Indications of their dreaming; from which the same Inference may be made, (some may say,) in Regard to their Souls as to the Souls of Men; and if so, as I before observed, no Man of sound Understanding would think himself injured, or be displeased, if a Horse or a Dog could be proved to have an immortal Soul: but, as they seem to have no Rule of Right for their Conduct, we have no Reason to think that they have an Afteraccount: and if they have a Rule of Right to govern their Actions by, it seems not to be discoverable by us: and that they have not was the Opinion of the wisest of the Antients, as appears from what I have quoted from some of them in this Discourse.

To

To these Arguments for an Effence in Man superior to his Senses, taken from Considerations on the Powers of passive Matter and the Operation of the human Mind, I will add some other, founded on the Attributes of God, for a future State. The Consideration of a wise and good Man subjecting himself voluntarily to some of the greatest Inconveniences of human Life from a virtuous Principle, and rejecting such Pleasures as he has both Power and Appetites to enjoy, only from a Persuasion of Mind that his enjoying such Pleasures would be attended with evil Consequences to other Persons, such a Consideration, I say, may induce a Man reasonably to believe that an infinite good and almighty God would not have endowed him with those Facultys, which prove repugnant to the Pleasures which offer themselves to him, without intending something more for him than his Existence here. Virtue is indeed generally productive of Happyness here; but many are the Instances of Men who have suffered themselves to become miserable, and who have continued so till they have ended their wretched Beings here, rather than they would depart from the Rule of Right; and if such Men lose all Consciousness with their Existence here, their Annihilation, for such I may call the Loss of Consciousness, is repugnant to God's Attribute of Goodness, to what seems to be his everlasting Rule of

Righteousness; because he endowed them with such Facultys as, by their paying Obedience to them, made them wretched: therefore I can not believe that the omnipotent Being, the Work of whose Power we are, would have created Man, and have provided for his Support in his Duration here, and, when he has struggled, as *Tully* * finely expresses himself on this Occasion, thro all his Labours, let him fall into an eternal Sleep.

That it is the Will of God that we should make the Rule of Right our Rule of Conduct is deduceable from his Attributes; and, as that Part of his Will is a natural Deduction from his Attributes, we should look on it as a Command; and we may be sure, from the Attributes of God, that an Obedience to such a Command will not be fruitless to us; for an omnipotent, allwise, and good, God would never lay a Command on us without signifying his being pleased with our Obedience to such a Command; and, as *Dr. Clarke* observes †, God can not signify his Pleasure or Displeasure to good or bad Actions but by Rewards. Tho I allow, with *Dr. Clarke*, that God can not signify his Pleasure or Displeasure

* Profecto fuit quædam Vis, quæ Generi consuleret humano; nec id gigneret aut aleret, quod cum exantlavisset omnes Labores, tum incideret in Mortis Malum sempiternum. *Tusc. Quæst.* Lib. 1.

† In his Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of natural Religion, &c. Prop. 3.

sure at good or bad Actions but by Rewards, yet I think he has no Foundation on Reason for his Doctrine * of eternal Punishments; because the Doctrine of eternal Punishments is as inconsistent with the Attributes of God as the grossest Error of the Church of *Rome*: but, as that is no Part of my present Enquiry, I shall not dwell on it here. As we may reasonably cherish a Prospect of a future State, we need not seek after the Distinction which God will make betwixt the just and unjust, whether he will shew his Regard to one by receiving him into a State of uninterrupted Happyness, and signify his Displeasure to the other by letting him ly in a State of Misery awhile. An Enquiry into the Degrees of Bliss which they shall hereafter enjoy who payed an Obedience here to the Rule of Right, whether proportioned to their Virtues, or whether all will be equally happy, or whether this Life is a State of Preparation for a better which also leads into another future State, or whether we shall after this Life possess one that will prove unalterable, these and such like Enquiries are needless, because no certain Knowledge thereof can here be attained. Among the fruitless Searches is that into the State of the Souls of departed Infants and Ideots.

The Prospect which we may indulge of a future State is a just Foundation of Comfort
to

* Prop. 13.

to us; but we must not make that the only Motive of all our Virtue; for he that can not be righteous without a Bribe has no Pretence to the Favour of God; but he that makes the Rule of Right his Rule of Conduct from the Propriety which he sees in it, from a Benevolence to Mankind which he thinks due to them, he is the Person that will meet his Reward, whether he ever had that Persuasion of Mind which brought him to a Belief in a future State or not; for a Belief in a future State is not necessary towards obtaining it. If we examine into the Springs of human Actions, we shall find those Men who are harmless only thro the Hope of future Happyness, and the Fear of God's Wrath, such Men, I say, we shall find destitute of all Benevolence; they refrain from Murders, Thefts, and Perjurys, because they dread Damnation, and the Laws of the Land; they do not refrain because of the Beauty which they see in Propriety of Action: such Men are of all Men most contemptible, and have as little Title to the Favour of God as a Monkey that refrains from hurtful Tricks thro Fear of the Whip; and such are the greater Part of those who are credulous in particular Systems of Religion which are composed of Articles of Faith without Reason for their Foundation, and of such Ceremonys as would render even a Monkey ridiculous in the Practice of them; and if such
Persons

Persons at any Time seem charitable, their poor Doles proceed not from true Charity, and Benevolence of Mind, but from Constraint; they are constrained to those Actions by their Fears: but the wise and good Man that resolves to make the Rule of Right his Rule of Conduct, whatever the Consequence may be hereafter, in which Rule of Right are included Acts of Benevolence when in our Power, such a Man is the Object of God's Favour; such a Man is sensible of the Truth which an excellent Author * has advanced, which is that *Honour is as much Honour itself, when acting by itself, and unseen, as when seen and applauded by all the World:* and every wise and good Man will make the Rule of Right his Rule of Conduct, and submit with a patient and respectful Resignation to the Will of God, whatever, as *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* says †, his Determination shall be concerning him.

I have demonstrated the Absurdity of talking of immaterial Substances, the Certainty of an Essence in the Constitution of Man superior to all the Qualitys of passive Matter, and the just Foundation of our Hope of a future State founded on the Attributes of God; and as these Truths are demonstrable by the Light of Nature, that is by the original Revelation

* The Earl of Shaftesbury in his *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*. Part 2d.

† Book 6.

tion implanted in the Constitution of Man, we may be sure that we need no supernatural Helps in these Enquirys. I may be asked, perhaps, if the Certainty of a future State ought not to be the principal Lure to Virtue, and if they who are virtuous only thro the Hopes of future Happyness have the least, and perhaps no, Pretence to future Happyness, of what real Use is the Knowledge of a future State? To which I answer: the Knowledge of a future State is useful to good Men who are virtuous without making that the Foundation of their Virtue: they have a Pleasure in the delightful Prospect, and their Spirits are supported by it in the greatest Calamitys; and yet the same Men would make the Rule of Right their Rule of Conduct without this delightful Prospect, and without this Support to their Spirits in the Hours of Distress.

After this Examination into the Nature of the human Soul, and into a future State, a Proof of our Freedom of Will is necessary before we can make any right Judgement concerning our Pretensions to the Favour of God: I therefore proceed to that Head.

DISCOURSE V.

On Liberty and Necessity, with a Demonstration of Freedom of Will, some Remarks on Mr. Locke's Chapter of Power, and some Observations on the Use and Abuse of the Passions.

A GREAT Waste of Words have been hitherto employed, by many and eminent Hands, on the Liberty and Necessity of human Actions; yet I know few Subjects in our philosophical Enquirys which will better admit of Brevity. In this Examination every favourite Passion should be layed asleep, lest they should arise and interest us in Behalf of Necessity: I say every favourite Passion, because I know some Men, endowed with no despicable Talents and possessed with no small Share of Knowledge, who are strenuous Defenders of the Necessity of human Actions; who, as far as I can judge from their Conduct, are Advocates for it, because

they hope that they commit no Action which they can shun; they therefore, in the Pursuit of their unjustifiable Pleasures, harden themselves in this Belief, and embrace the foolish Notion of Necessity in Hopes of avoiding the Guilt of Liberty abused.

Previous to my Demonstration of Freewill, I must shew in what human Liberty consists. Man is free, in being able to act, within his Sphere of Power, from the Result of his Will; and that Man is perfect, who is able to act from the Result of his last Judgement after a just and wise Examination.

Of human Actions are two Sorts, the internal and external: the first is of the Mind, the other of the Body: the latter is always a Consequence of the first; and the first often happens, without being followed by the latter.

As Mr. *Locke*, in his Chapter of *Power* *, has endeavoured to represent the Word *Free-will* as a nonsensical Term; and to prove the Will of Man not free, even while he is defending the Liberty of the Agent, I shall take an Occasion here to publish some of my Considerations on that Chapter. Tho I pay a great Respect to the Memory of Mr. *Locke*, I pay a greater to Truth; and while I, in Part, discover the sophistical Jargon of entirely needless, and often false, Distinctions, with which he has clouded the few Truths

I advan-

* The 21st of the 2d Book of his *Essay concerning human Understanding*.

advanced in that Chapter, I will make my Opposition to him absolutely necessary towards establishing the Doctrine of Freewill. Mr. *Locke's* Authority carries great Weight with it, and often deservedly; but when Errors are propagated under the Sanction of a great Name, those Obstacles should be removed to give Place to such Truths as they are repugnant to.

Mr. *Locke*, in Order to prove *Liberty not an Idea* * *belonging to Volition or preferring*, among other Arguments, full as improper, uses this: † *suppose a Man carryed, whilst fast asleep, into a Room, where is a Person he longs to see and speak with, and suppose him there locked in, beyond his Power to get out: he wakes, and is glad to find himself in so desirable Company, which he stays willingly in, i. e. prefers his Stay to going away. Is not this Stay voluntary? I think nobody will doubt it; and yet, being locked fast in, 'tis evident he is not at Liberty not to stay, he has not Freedom to be gone: so that Liberty is not an Idea belonging to Volition, or preferring.* Here this great Reasoner has advanced an Argument destructive of what he endeavoured to prove,

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* He thus judiciously explains the Word *Idea*, it being that Term, which, I think, serves best to stand for whatsoever is the Object of the Understanding when a Man thinks, I have used it to express whatever it is which the Mind can be employed about in thinking. Book 1, Chap. 1, Sect. 8.

† Book 2, Chap. 21, Sect. 10.

viz. that Liberty is not an Idea belonging to Volition: how does he demonstrate this? He says the Man can not go out of the Room if he would, but that he is free to chuse whether he would or not, without knowing that the Door is locked. This is no Misconstruction of his Words. Here the Will is free, or the Man is free to will, tho he has not the Power to execute that Will; therefore Liberty is here an Idea annexed to Volition; for the Man not being able to execute his Will does not destroy his Power of willing, or preferring, his staying in to going out, or going out to staying in.

*A Man's Heart beats, says the same Author *, and the Blood circulates, which is not in his Power by any Thought or Volition to stop; and therefore in Respect of these Motions, where Rest depends not on his Choice, nor would follow the Determination of his Mind, if it should prefer it, he is not a free Agent. A Man by willing only, without the Application of a Pistol, a Sword, or Poyson, or some other Instrument, can not stop the Circulation of his Blood: but all this is no more than saying a Man can not do what he can not do: Mr. Locke therefore might as well have sayed that a Man can not scale the Skys, and therefore is not a free Agent; for one Argument no more affects human Liberty than the other, human Liberty consisting, as*

I layed before, *in being able to act, within our Sphere of Power, from the Result of our Will*: therefore unless stopping the Circulation of the Blood, by merely *willing*, and scaling the Skys, can be reduced to the Limits of human Power, that is our Sphere of Action, these Arguments are impertinent, and conduce only to the Embarrassment of the Subject.

Now I have shewed the Bounds to which this Argument is confined, and the Consequence of transgressing those Bounds, I will proceed to a clear Demonstration of the Freedom of the Will, or of Man being free to will: and as I have divided human Actions into two Classes, the internal and external, I will begin with the first.

If a Proposition, in any philosophical or religious Enquiry, is layed before us, the Question is not whether we can resist what seems Conviction to us, but, previous to that, whether we will exert our Facultys in an Enquiry after Truth, or remain ignorant in the Errors which we may have imbibed, or in an indolent Indifference. Here the Will is to determine whether we shall enter into an Examination; and if the Will determines us to enter into a strict Examination, Conviction on one Side or other is the Consequence: but after Conviction the Man is free to *will* whether to disclose his Sentiments or conceal them. This is an Action of the Mind; and in this the Will is free; for the *Will* is what deter-

determines whether the Man shall disclose his Sentiments or conceal them, tho the *Judgement* determined in the Conviction of what is Right or Wrong: Conviction, being the necessary Consequence of Examination, is no Infringement on the Freedom of the Will: whether we shall conceal or relate our Sentiments, or whether we shall act with Hypocrisy, and relate as real what is contrary to our Sentiments, is still in our Choice or Will: and that the Freedom is lodged in the *Will* Mr. *Locke* has confessed, contrary to his Intent, tho he has used another Word: speaking of the Necessity of a waking Man having some Ideas, he says, * *whether he will remove his Contemplation from one Idea to another is many Times in his Choice*. If any one can with Propriety annex any Meaning here to the Word *Choice* besides that which must be annexed to the Word *Will*, I will give up all Pretensions to Reason: if the removing our Contemplation from one Idea to another is often in our *Choice*, the *Will* is often free to act, as thinking is an Action of the Mind; for here Mr. *Locke* lodges the Power of removing the Contemplation in the *Choice*; and if we *chuse* to remove our Contemplation, I am sure we *will* the Removal of it: yet in the next Section but one he asserts Liberty not to belong to the *Will*: his Words are these: *it*

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* Sect. 12.

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is as insignificant to ask whether *Man's Will* be free, as to ask whether his *Sleep* be swift, or his *Virtue square*: whence we may infer that he uses the Word *Choice* in the same Meaning that he does the Word *prefer* soon after, when he says, * *tho a Man would prefer flying to walking, yet who can say he wills it?* I say he who *prefers* one Action to another *wills* it; and tho it may be out of his Power to perform it, yet he would perform it if he could; therefore the Action of the Mind is the same.

Every one who judges candidly must acknowledge that Mr. *Locke's* Distinctions are burdensome, and may raise a Distaste in some Readers, and make them drop the Enquiry before they have entered far into it; therefore let us agree to make the Terms *Freewill* and *human Liberty* synonymous: by *Freewill* we mean that Man is *free to will*; and if we agree to use these two Terms as synonymous, all Confusion will be avoided: but whoever insists on the *Will* not being free, the same ought to prove the *Will* no Power of what we call the *Soul* or *Mind*; which I am certain is impossible to be proved; for the *Will* can be no Power of the *Body*, which, without the internal Powers, is no more than a Gun, or any other lifeless Machine; and as the *Will* must precede every external Action, if Freedom

* Sect. 15.

dom is not lodged there, it can not be lodged in the Body: however, as the internal and external Parts constitute the Man, we will call the Agent, so constituted, free.

I now proceed to a farther Demonstration of human Liberty in two Instances, the first in an Action of the Mind, the other in an Action of both Mind and Body. Let us suppose a Man enamoured with a beautiful Woman, and let us likewise suppose the Woman married and to have Children; the Desires of the Man are very strong towards her; and he has a Prospect of possessing her, if he pursues the End of his Desires with Assiduity. Does not such a Man, if we suppose him capable of distinguishing another's Property from his own, know that this Woman, to whom his Heart inclines, is the Right of another, and that if he should possess her, and the rash Deed be known, Husband, Children, and Parents if she has any, may all be rendered wretched thro their Lives by one base Act of his, the Pleasure of a Moment? All these evil Consequences any Man, who has Address enough to win the Heart of Innocence, must be apprised of in his Mind. His *Desires* are strong, and his *Judgement* of the Consequences is at the same Time right; and his *Will* must determine which he shall obey: his *Will* is awhile suspended; and the Struggle betwixt his *Desires* and his *Judgement* is

this, whether he shall prefer a momentary Pleasure to the Happyness of Numbers, and probably to his own future Peace. The Consequences considered, the Destruction of the Ease of several, and himself and the Woman likely to be no inconsiderable Sharer in the Ruin, he resolves to check his Passion, and never to communicate it: here is an Act of the Mind that speaks Freedom; for he was certainly free to pursue the End of his Desires, or not to pursue it.

Let us suppose another Man as desirous of the same Woman, and as apprehensive of the evil Consequences of enjoying her; he nevertheless, assuming an Air of Gallantry, tramples on all moral Considerations, possesses the Woman, and reduces a whole Family to a State of Misery. Here is an Action of both Mind and Body; which speaks as much Freedom in the Agent as the other does. I know the common Excuse for Actions of this Sort is the Prevalency of Impulse.

They who stand up for the Necessity of human Actions say, if the Impulse of Love in the Man (I should give it a grosser Name) had not been stronger than his Judgement, he would have yielded to the latter; but as it was stronger he could not resist it; therefore the Consequences were all inevitably necessary. This is the Logic which the Advocates for Necessity use, and these the Deductions which they make from Propositions favourable

vourable to their Passions: but this Error lyes in their Want of considering in what the Strength of the Passions consists. The Strength of any particular Passion, let us say Love, consists in the Effect which the Object of the Passion has on the Person affected; and the Strength of the Judgement consists in separating and comparing Ideas, and in seeing the Rectitude of Action; and Liberty consists in having the Power to follow the Direction of our Judgement or our Passion; and Virtue and Vice consist in paying Obedience to, or departing from, what we see to be the Rule of Right. To render this Argument for Liberty more clear, let us examine into the Use and Abuse of one particular Passion; and as I began with Love, let us continue the same. The Love of the Sexes to each other is in this Life a Blessing when cherished without departing from the Rule of Right: and let any Man consider what he loses by subduing this Passion, when fixed on an improper Object, and he will find, if a Paradox may be here allowed, all his Losses Gains. Let us have our Eyes on the two Instances just before produced. The Man loses a momentary Joy; and if the Act of Love, which is the Completion always of these Desires, is often repeated, it is still a momentary Joy; with the Loss of this neither his Health nor Fortune are impaired, but more likely to be preserved; for
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the Loss of this he has the Satisfaction of not having destroyed the Peace of a Family; no Inconvenience attends him, if he ceases his Pursuit, and innumerable are those which may follow the Completion of his Desires; all which he knows, and is therefore free to chuse (having a Capacity to indulge his Desires, and a Capacity to refrain,) whether he shall follow the Direction of his Judgement or Passion; and, being free to chuse, he is inexcusable if he hearkens not to the Dictates of his Judgement: and every Man, that is not an Idiot, knows the Rule of Right, tho one Man can refine on it more than another; and every Man is free to chuse whether he will pursue it or not.

I shall conclude my Discourse on Liberty with the following excellent Passage from Mr. Locke *. *Without Liberty the Understanding would be to no Purpose; and without Understanding Liberty (if it could be) would signify Nothing. If a Man sees what would do him Good or Harm, what would make him happy or miserable, without being able to move himself one Step towards or from it, what is he the better for seeing? And he that is at Liberty to ramble in perfect Darkeness, what is his Liberty better than if he were driven up and down, as a Bubble by the Force of the Wind?*

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* Book 2, Chap. 21, Sect. 67.

When we have attained a certain Knowledge of the human Constitution, and of Freedom of Will which is a Part of the Constitution of Man, we may easily discover the Origin of Evil, to which I now proceed; in my Enquiry into which I will give farther Proofs of human Liberty.

DISCOURSE VI.

A physical Enquiry into the Origin of Evil; in which Freedom of Will is farther asserted, with some more Observations on the Use and Abuse of the Passions.

THE Majority of eminent Men among Christian Divines who have written on the Origin of Evil, instead of searching into the Nature of Things, have employed their Talents in endeavouring to explain one of the most ridiculous Fables that ever was devised; and an Enquiry into that Story they vainly call an Enquiry into the Origin of Evil; wherefore most of our Discourses on this Subject consist of Comments on the Inventions of Men, derogatory from the Honour of God, and highly reflecting, from the Popularity thereof, on the Dignity of human Understanding. Some Men, unable to surmount the Prejudices of Education, are sincere in their Follies of this Sort; they are

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pardonable: but some, I doubt not, have been Advocates for the most shocking Falsehoods, because they had listd themselves in a Cause which their Interest obliged them to plead, and so became stumbling-blocks to Mankind by casting Absurditys in their Way, and annexing Punishments to their Disbelief of them; such Men are unpardonable, and are to be numbered among the greatest Enemies to Society for corrupting the Minds of thousands into wrong Notions of the Deity, and for substituting for Virtue and Truth something that is neither Virtue nor Truth.

A famous Author *, esteemed, while he lived, the Champion of the Church, and now in some Repute, has made the Origin of Evil the Subject of a long Chapter, without advancing one philosophical Argument therein; the only Origin which he insists on is the Fall of Man as related by *Moses*, and that without offering one wise Solution in Defence of God's Justice: to this *Jewish* Story he confusedly labours to make gentile Writers allude, and particularly *Plato*, and often forces a Parallel where none is to be found, seeming at the same Time not to know that, if such Parallels could be made, they would not confirm the Truth of what he chiefly strives to establish. This prolix Comment on the Fall of Man continued in great Esteem, as a masterly

* Bp. *Stillingfleet*, in his *Orig. Sacr.* Book 3, Chap. 3.

terly Discourse on the Origin of Evil, till more rational Divines arose; among which is the late Dr. *Samuel Clarke*, who divides * Evil into three Sorts, viz. *Evil of Imperfection, as the Want of certain Facultys and Excellency*s which other Creatures have, or *natural Evil, as Pain, Death, and the like, or moral Evil, as all Kind of Vice*. These are the three Classes into which Evil, in the largest Extent, can be divided: but Death I think no Evil, whether Consciousness remains after it or not; for if we shall be sensible of an Existence beyond the Grave, we only remove from one State to another; and Pain and Sicknes (if our Essences should happen then to be subject to them) will be the same as they are now in the several Degrees thereof; and the just Man has no Reason to be apprehensive of an Encrease of Trouble; nor has the most wicked Wretch any Room to dread the everlasting Wrath of the Almighty, for incessant Resentment against weak and finite Creatures is as repugnant to the Attributes of God as Light to Darkness; and if an eternal Insensibility is the Doom of many, or of all, that is no more to be reckoned an Evil than the present Insensibility is to be counted so to the Boards or Clay on which we tread. Pain and Sicknes are certainly Evils; for let the
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* In his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*. Prop. 1C.

most rigid *Stoic* appeal to his own Mind when he feels the Acuteness of the Stone or Gout, he can not pronounce it a Good, but, on the contrary, his Agonys will make him tacitly confess it to be, what is opposite to a Good, an Evil; yet those excellent Men (for such many of them were tho some had their Superstitions) the *Stoics* were undoubtedly right when they asserted that the pusillanimous Tempers of Men represent Pain to them a greater Evil than it really is in itself. The third Sort of Evil here mentioned, every Kind of Vice, is no otherwise an Evil but as it is productive of Pain, as it is the Root of almost all human Misery here, and the Bar to future Happyness.

Now I have declared what I take Evil, in my humble Opinion, to be, I proceed to the Origin thereof; which Dr. *Clarke* * wisely apprehends to be the Abuse of that Liberty which was given originally to Man: and whoever will seriously apply himself to an Examination into the Ideas of his Mind, how they come there, and how and wherefore some Ideas dwell longer there than other Objects of the Mind, and how and wherefore some fade away soon after their Conception, and then appeal to every Day's Experience, such a Person, I say, will soon discover the Abuse of human Liberty to be the Fountain of all moral Evil. As every Object of Sense

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* Prop. 10.

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is an Object of human Understanding, and as the Mind is capable of forming any Idea simple or complex, within the Reach of human Understanding, the Mind is likewise able to dwell longer on one Idea than another according to the Pleasure which that Idea gives, and is also able to reject a disagreeable Idea that may occur to it, and make that Idea give Place to some other which shall be agreeable in the Contemplation: the Ideas which sometimes arise from immediate corporeal Pain, or particular heavy Pressures of Fortune, can not indeed be displaced by the Will; but such Ideas are out of the present Question; however, I know, by Experience, that a Man may sometimes indulge his Speculations on Subjects foreign to his present Grievance even while a severe Disease is on him. That the Power of cherishing or rejecting particular Ideas is lodged in the Will appears in many Instances. A Man sees an extraordinary beautiful Woman, the Idea of whom, while he sees her, is an involuntary Idea: when the real Object is departed, let us suppose the Idea still remaining; the Man cherishes this Idea; why does he cherish it? Because he conceives a Pleasure therein; one of the Consequences of which is the Desire of enjoying her. This Man, when he begins to cherish the pleasing Idea, should consider what in all Probability may be the Consequence thereof to himself and to the
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Object of his Wishes: if, in pondering the Consequences on both Sides, he finds, according to all rational Appearance, the Effects likely to be productive of Happyness to himself and the Woman, and to answer the visible End of his Being, and that no third Person can possibly sustain any Damage from his possessing her, he is right in cherishing the Idea, and in pursuing his Design; but, on the contrary, if, in weighing the Consequences, he sees a Likelyhood of future Uneasyness to happen to the Woman, and a Certainty of other Persons being hurt by his possessing her, he is unjust in cherishing the Idea. Here the Use of the Passions appear; they are given to us to be the Instruments of our Pleasure, and Reason is given to us to direct those Passions with Justice.

We are now arrived to an Opening into the Origin of Evil: Man's cherishing an Idea, the Consequences of which on Consideration appear hurtful, is the Birth of Evil; and if a Man, after examining the Consequences likely to ensue, and finding them hurtful, ceases to cherish the Idea, from a just Sense of the Evil Consequences, such a Man declines being the Author of an Evil, or Evils, which otherwise would happen; and his being possessed of the Power of cherishing or rejecting Ideas of this Kind renders him inexcuseable if he departs from the Rule of Right; and that every Man is possessed of

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this Power will appear from every Man's own Experience, if he will examine it with Candour. Would every Man, as soon as he finds himself fortified with Reason to distinguish Right from Wrong in the common Occurrences of Life, which every Man that is not an Idiot is able to do before he has seen twenty Years, would every Man, I say, as soon as he is fortified with such a Portion of Reason, resolve to examine his Ideas as they arise in his Mind, to what Consequences they tend, and would he resolve to cease from cherishing them when he finds them leading to Evil, the cursed Root of all moral and most Part of natural Evil would be destroyed, and an universal Harmony would be among Men: and tho there is but little, perhaps no, Likelihood of this Resolution being put in Execution by all Men, yet it is the Duty of all Men to put it in Execution.

Tho I have given but one Instance of the Origin of Evil being the Abuse of human Liberty in cherishing Ideas attended with evil Consequences, yet every Man's Experience, which is the best Testimony to appeal to, will furnish him with thousands of other Instances, Instances of Ideas which lead not only to Acts of Injustice, but to such Actions as are productive of Diseases in himself, and in his Posterity. This, which is the Origin of moral Evil in all Men now existing, was the Origin of all moral Evil in all created rational Beings,

Beings, who have lapsed from their State of perfect Reason, whether Beings who existed on this terraqueous Globe six or seven thousand, or seven hundred thousand, Years since, or whether Beings who existed ten Millions of Years since, in as many Millions of Worlds in separate Parts of Space. This is the baneful Root from which spring all Sorts of moral Evil, like Branches from the Body of a Tree; and from this cursed Root are derived most of what we call natural Evils, the various Species of Pain and Sickness; and even Death itself is precipitated thereby: by the Vices of a Father Diseases are often entailed on the Son; and, by a continued vicious Race, many Familys, from Generation to Generation, come into the World, each Person, with an imperfect Stamen of Life; and several pass their Days in Misery thro the Maladys which they derive from the Vices of their Predecessors: all which natural Imperfections originally proceeded from some Persons having cherished Ideas leading to what was hurtful. Men are subjected to some Diseases by external Accidents to which they themselves, in no Part, voluntarily contribute, such as proceed from the Inclemencys of the Air in some particular Seasons, from Falls, and some other Accidents which may be thought of in our Considerations on this Subject: but the greater Number of Diseases, and the most acute, to which we are now liable, and which

often become hereditary, spring from this Origin of moral Evil. A physical Enquiry into the Effects of Drunkenness, Gluttony, Excess of Venery, and other Irregularitys, of which too many Men are guilty, will render this Origin of all moral, and most Kinds of natural, Evil too clear to be disputed; and many Maladys with which Men are afflicted by the Inclemencys of the Air at particular Seasons are often admitted into the Body by the Means of former Vices and Irregularitys of which the Man has been guilty; so that such a Man may be sayed to have prepared his Body, by vicious Habits, for the Reception of such Diseases, whereas another Person who has lived in a temperate and sober Manner is armed against such Inclemencys of Weather as will affect the other.

The only Task which now remains on my Hands, before I enter on the moral Relations in which we stand to each other, is to lay down a clear Distinction betwixt the Words *God, Providence, and Nature.*

DISCOURSE VII.

*On God, Providence, and Nature,
shewing the frequent Misapplica-
tions of these three Words, and
the Ideas which ought to be an-
nexed to them.*

GOD, *Providence*, and *Nature*, are three Words which have been oftener misapplied by Philosophers than any other. The Word *God*, has been frequently abused by false and weak Definitions; and the Word *Providence* is often used where the Word *Nature* should be; and we find *Nature* too often with the same Idea annexed to it that we should join to *God*. By such Misapplication of Words, and Confusion of Ideas, Writers themselves are often bewildered in their Search, and their Readers led astray while they are seeking after Instruction: I shall therefore endeavour, by pointing out the Errors of some eminent Men, and by giving a Definition of these three Words, to fix such

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Ideas to them as will prevent all Mistakes in the Application of them, if rightly observed.

Dr. *Clarke* *, in his Definition of *God*, says he is *without Motion*; and *Locke* † says *Motion can not be attributed to God, not because he is an immaterial, but because he is an infinite, Spirit*. This Doctrine is certainly destructive of the Notion of a Deity; for if Motion is but a given Property of passive Matter how can *God* who gave it be without it? *God* can not give that which he has not to give: and the Idea of a motionless Being naturally leads to the Idea of an inactive and unthinking Being. That I may render the Absurdity of this Part of the Definition of *God* clear, I will produce Passages from the same Authors directly repugnant to this Part of their Definition of the Deity. *Clarke* judiciously observes ‡ that *the divine Will can not but always and necessarily determine itself to chuse to do what, in the Whole, is absolutely best and fittest to be done, that is, to act constantly according to the eternal Rules of infinite Goodness, Justice, and Truth*: and, in the same Proposition, he wisely says *the allpowerful Creator and Governour of the Universe, who*
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* In his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*. Prop. 6.

† In his *Essay concerning human Understanding*. Book 2, Ch. 23, Sect. 21.

‡ In his *Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of natural Religion, &c.* Prop. 1.

has the absolute and uncontrollable Dominion over all Things in his own Hands, and is accountable to none for what he does, thinks it no Diminution of his Power to make this Reason of Things the unalterable Rule and Law of all his own Actions in the Government of the World. Locke says * that pure Spirit, viz. God, is only active; pure Matter is only passive. Now let us consider what these two learned Men affirm in the first Passages which I quote, which is that God is without Motion; and let us examine into the latter Quotations, which define God as active. Unless Action can be demonstrated to be without Motion, these are selfevident Contradictions. Passive Matter itself could not have been put in Motion by the first Mover without Motion in the first Mover; for without some Impulse, without Something that moved, passive Matter could have had no Mutation from the State of Rest, or Stillness, in which it was before put in Motion. Here we see some of the Consequences of learned and ingenious Men carrying their Enquirys farther than the Necessity of the Subject requires: we are therefore to consider what is demonstrable of God, beyond Contradiction, and to go no farther: that he is selfexistent and omnipotent I have proved in two former Discourses; and

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that

* In his *Essay concerning human Understanding*. Book 2, Chap. 23, Sect. 28.

that the Essence of all Matter is eternal, but subject to the Will of an everlasting, almighty, allwise, and good, Being, I have likewise clearly shewed; the Result of which two Demonstrations, viz. the Being of God and the Eternity of Matter, yields this positive Knowledge of God, that he *is*, and that he is selfexistent and omnipotent; and it likewise yields this positive Knowledge, that they who represent God as filling every Part of Space with his Essence make every Thing a Part of God: they who would conceive justly of God must think him a Being incomprehensible in his Essence, tho known by his Works: they must think of him as an eternal incorruptible Being, infinite in Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, perceiving and moving all Things: which is the Idea that the *Stoics* annexed to God; and which is agreeable to the Definition given by *Pythagoras*, and delivered down to us as his by the Fathers * of the Christian Church. When, as I have observed † before, we have arrived to the Knowledge of all that is comprehensible of God, let us sit down contented, and not idly seek farther after his Essence, and the Mode of his Existence, and his Manner of Operation in his Works; which are not to be discovered by us in the State in which we are; and,

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* See *Justin Martyr*, in his Apology, or Λογ. παρ. α.

† In the second Discourse,

if ever they will be, they can not till our Facultys are greatly enlarged: therefore when we use the Word *God*, no other Idea, no other Meaning, should be annexed to it but that of an eternal incorruptible Being, infinite in Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, perceiving and moving all Things: they who talk of his being *without Parts or Motion* *, and having an *absolute Infinity of Immensity and Fullness*, burden the Subject with unnecessary Jargon; the Consequence of which, if examined by the purest Logic, is that the unbounded Universe is a Plenum, and that Plenum is God.

Now I have layed down the Meaning which ought to be annexed to the Word *God*, I proceed to shew the Misuse that has been made of the Word *Providence*. The Word *Providence* is often used to express some extraordinary Interposition of the Hand of God in human Affairs, without which Interposition we are to suppose that such an Accident would not have happened in the common Course of Things: but by whatever Men Storys are told visibly repugnant to the natural Course of Things, to the known System of Creation, such a Repugnancy is a Proof of the Falseness of the Relation; or if such a Repugnancy is not a Proof of the False-

* See Clarke in his *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*. Prop. 6.

Falsehood, it is certainly no Foundation for Belief; because supposing, what has never yet been proved to have been, that some extraordinary Event should, in one Age or other, have happened without the Concurrence of natural Causes, Mankind has but two Ways of being certain of the Truth of such an Event; one is ocular Demonstration, and the other an infallible Assurance from God himself of the Truth of it; and neither of these Proofs can be any Demonstration to a Person who neither saw the Transaction, nor was favoured with the Assurance of the Truth of it from God himself: for if I myself had seen a Man raised from the dead, I should not expect to be believed, notwithstanding the most solemn Protestations which I could make, by another who did not see the same: because whoever should believe me, his Belief would be founded on no Proof, but on his Credulity in the Relater; and if Relations of Accidents visibly repugnant to the natural Course of Things may be true, Mankind has no Criterion to distinguish Truth from Falsehood: and one Reason, which weighs much with me, against any extraordinary Interposition of the Hand of God, and especially if the Necessity of Belief is annexed thereto, is the Goodness of God; for, as we are sure of the Goodness of God, we are likewise sure that he will not annex the Necessity of Belief to any Thing, without giving the Means of

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Probation to all alike: this is a selfevident Truth.

Another Misuse of the Word *Providence* is when it is applied to signify an extraordinary Interposition of the Hand of God in Occurrences which might have happened in the natural Course of Things: an Instance of which we have in the Writings of Dr. *Clarke*; * where he mentions *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Tully*, *Epictetus*, and *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, as Men raised by Providence as Instruments to reprove the Nations for their Wickedness. I know not what Reason he could have for this Supposition, unless he thought that no Man could lay down a rational System of Ethics, without the Help of an extraordinary *Providence*; and if all these Men were raised by such a *Providence*, as is here to be understood, and supposing the primitive Christians to have been raised by the same *Providence*, I should think that *Antoninus* would not have spoke with so little Respect of them as he does in the eleventh Book of his *Meditations*: but the Passage here refered to in the Works of *Clarke* is one of those in which that truly learned Divine sometimes talks unphilosophically. All Men who have written well in Defence of Virtue writ in Defence of it because they saw the
Fitness

* See his *Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of natural Religion*, &c. Prop. 6.

Fitness of it, because they knew that Nothing, as *Antoninus* divinely says, * is really good and advantageous to Man but that which renders him virtuous, and Nothing really evil and detrimental to him but that which produces contrary Effects.

Now I have shewed the Misapplication of the Word *Providence*, I shall shew how it is to be rightly applyed. *Providence* has sometimes been used for the Deity himself, and is sometimes synonymous with *Nature*: but the Idea which I think ought strictly to be annexed to the Word is, the Continuation of the Means which God has given to every Creature to answer the End of his Creation, or a Continuation of the Means with which every Part of this, or any, System of Creation is *provided* to answer the Purposes to which it is assigned. I am apprehensive of the frivolous Objections which may be made to this Definition by some Halfthinking Men; but I am certain that not an Objection can be started, which I can not obviate, and in so doing justify the *Providence* of God to Men.

I

* Book 8. The Difference betwixt the Doctrine of the *Stoics* and *Peripatetics* concerning the Estimation of Virtue is this: the *Stoics* would have Virtue to be the *only Good*: the *Peripatetics* allowed Virtue to be the *chief Good*. Sive Honestum solum Bonum est, ut *Stoicis* placet, sive quod honestum est id ita summum Bonum est, quemadmodum *Peripateticis* vestris videtur, ut omnia ex altera Parte collata, vix minimi Momenti instar habeant. *Cicer.* de Offic. Lib. 3.

I

I shall now endeavour to settle the Idea which ought to be fixed to the Word *Nature*; and I shall first shew how it has been unwarily used where the Word *God* should be. Says *Locke* * *Nature, I confess, has put into Man a Desire of Happyness, and an Aversion to Misery.* *Nature* is here the Word to which we must annex an Idea of that *Power* to which Man owes his Desire of Happyness, and his Aversion to Misery, which *Power* is *God*. If *Locke* had sayd Man has, by his *Nature*, a Desire of Happyness, and an Aversion to Misery, he had used the Word right; for by the *Nature* of Man we mean the human Constitution, with which *God*, who is the Author of the *Nature* or *Constitution* of Man, endowed the Species called Man; therefore it is *God* that has put into Man, by the *Constitution* or *Nature* with which he endowed him, a Desire of Happyness, and an Aversion to Misery. The Word *Nature* is applicable to *God* himself; and when it is we mean the *Nature* of *God*; which signifys his Attributes, by which we judge of the Truth or Falsehood of Things related of him: if a Fact is related inconsistent with the Selfexistence, Omnipotence, infinite Wisdom, or Goodness, of *God*, we properly say it is not consistent with the *Nature* of *God*, or with
such

* In his *Essay concerning human Understanding*. Book 1, Chap. 3, Sect. 3.

such an Attribute or Attributes; and therefore we justly pronounce it false. When we speak of the *Course of Nature*, relating to any System of Creation in any Part of Space, we mean certain Effects flowing from certain Causes in a regular and continued Manner: the Difference betwixt the Idea which we should annex to *God* and that which we should annex to *Nature* will plainly appear when we consider them thus together: *God*, who acts necessarily wisely and righteously, contrived the general Frame of Things in the World, and layed down Laws of Motion, from which by a Concatenation of Causes results whatever is now done in it.

When we hear of Occurrences repugnant to that known System of which we are a Part, if we believe the Reports of such Occurrences, we sacrifice an original Revelation, which is implanted in our Nature, meaning Reason or the Power of judging from Appearances, to the Inventions of Men. Dr. Clarke has affirmed * that *there is no such Thing as what Men commonly call the Course of Nature*; and he says *the Course of Nature, truly and properly speaking, is Nothing else but the Will of God producing certain Effects in a continued, regular, and uniform, Manner*. Here he first denies the *Course of Nature*, and then defines

* In his *Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of natural Religion*, &c. Prop. 14.

defines it. If the *Course of Nature* is the *Will of God* producing certain Effects in a continued, regular, and uniform, Manner, the *Will of God*, I say, producing certain Effects in a continued, regular, and uniform, Manner, is the *Course of Nature*: what we call the *Course of Nature* flows from the *Will of God*, yet the *Will of God* is not it, but the Cause of it. Says Clarke, in the same Proposition, *if upon any particular Occasion, we should see a Stone suspended in the Air, or a Man walking upon the Water, without any visible Support, a chronical Disease cured with a Word speaking, or a dead and corrupted Body restored to Life in a Moment, we could not then doubt but there was an extraordinary Interposition either of God himself, in Order to signify his Pleasure upon that particular Occasion, or at least of some intelligent Agent far superior to Man, in Order to bring about some particular Design.* Whoever should see such Wonders could not resist the Conviction of his Eyes; but he that saw them not has no Reason to believe the Report of another who says he saw them, because by such a Belief he would sacrifice, as I sayed before, an original Revelation to what he ought to think the Inventions of Men; and if the Necessity of Belief is urged by the Reporters, the Attributes of God serve for another Criterion to judge by: he that is infinitely good and wise can not require the same Assent from those

who did not see such Miracles which he would from those who did see them; because the latter are supposed to have infallible Conviction, and the other no Means of knowing what they are required to believe. Disbelief, in these Cases, when founded on Reason, proceeds from a Knowledge of the Nature of Things joined to the highest Reverence and Opinion of God: the *Stoics* therefore went on the most solid Foundation when they asserted * that Nothing happens to Man but what happens according to the natural Course of Things, and that both Good and † Evil are rationally to be accounted for according to the general System of the Universe: and on this Foundation the Beautys of Virtue, and the Deformitys of Vice, will evidently appear, and on the same Foundation is God's Providence to be justified.

Without positive Ideas fixed to Words, and especially to Words of such Importance as *God*, *Providence*, and *Nature*, in philosophical Enquirys, we can not communicate Truth; and if these Definitions are observed we shall never doubt what Ideas, or Meanings, to annex to these Words. Having thus prepared the Way, I now proceed to a full Discovery of the Relations in which we stand to God and to each other; and I will demonstrate that *God* requires no more of us than *Nature* requires;

* *Marc. Aurel. Antoninus. B. 5.*

† See Book 8.

requires; by which I mean, we have that original Revelation in our *Nature* or *Constitution*, which points out to us our whole Duty to both *God* and *Man*; and this Truth an eminent Divine started in some lucid Intervals, however afterwards he happened to lose Sight of her in his Chase: *God*, says he*, *created the Soul of Man not only capable of finding out the Truth of Things, but furnished him with a sufficient Κριτηριον or Touchstone to discover Truth from Falsehood, by a Light set up in his Understanding.*

* *Stillingfleet*, in his *Orig. Sacr.* Book 1, Chap. 2.

DISCOURSE VIII.

An Enquiry into Beauty and Perfection, containing a Demonstration of our Duty to God and Man, with a Distinction betwixt Benevolence and Selflove, and a Defence of the moral Doctrine of the Stoics against Pretensions to Revelation, proving that God requires no more of us than Nature requires, and that he who departs from the Laws of Nature disobeys the Will of God.

THE great Founder * of the *Stoic* Sect has well observed, that the End of Man is to live agreeable to the Dictates of

* ΠρωτοϚ Ζηνων, εν τω περι Ανθρωπου Φυσεως, Τελος ειπε το ομολογουμενως τη Φυσει ζην, οπερ εστι κατ' Αρετην ζην, αγει γαρ προς ταυτην ημας η Φυσις. Diog. Laert. in Vita Zenonis.
We need not doubt that this Passage of *Zeno*, from his Treatise

of *Nature*, that is according to *Virtue*, to which we are by *Nature* directed: and my principal End in this, and the preceding Discourses, is to prove that *God* requires no more of us than *Nature* requires, in Order to which, as I before observed, I must discover what *Nature* requires of us as we stand related one to another, and what *Nature* tells us *God* requires of us as we stand related to him.

Before I directly proceed to the moral Relation in which we stand to *God*, to each other, and to ourselves, a short Review of what I have already demonstrated, as previously necessary before we come to the last Point, may help to keep awake the Attention of the Reader, and enable him to take in at one View the divine System of Morality and Truth, which I have endeavoured to lay be-

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Treatise on the Nature of Man, is faithfully transmitted to us by *Diogenes Laertius*; for we find it thus translated by *Tully*, with little Variation, in the third Book of his *Offices*. Quod summum Bonum a *Stoicis* dicitur, convenienter Naturæ vivere, id habet hanc, ut opinor, Sententiam, cum Virtute congruere semper: and agreeable to this *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* frequently expresses himself, as the fundamental Doctrine of the *Stoics*. After *Zeno's* Time many ridiculous Superstitions crept into the *Stoic* Sect, as appear in many antient Writings, and abundantly in *Cicero's* Treatise of the Nature of the Gods, tho the Writings of *Epietetus* and *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus* are not tainted with the many Superstitions which subjected the *Stoic* in *Cicero's* Treatise of the Nature of the Gods to the just Ridicule of the *Epicurean*.

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fore him at no small Expence of Thought ; and I can not here prefer a better Wish than that his Pleasure in reading may be equal to mine in the Meditation thereof.

I. In the first Discourse I have shewed the Impossibility of the Existence of Man without the Concurrence of an omnipotent Power ; the Result of which Discovery is the Certainty of the Being of God.

II. The second Discourse contains a Demonstration of the Attributes of God ; which teach us to reject all Reports repugnant to them ; and which are infallible Guides to us in moral and religious Speculations.

III. I have proved, in the third Discourse, the Eternity of Matter, in Order to shew the Inconsistencys which they run into, who endeavour to add false Glory to God, by imputing to him a Power which even Omnipotence has not.

IV. The fourth Discourse contains an Enquiry into the Immortality of the Soul ; and in it the Expectation of future Rewards is fixed on a reasonable Foundation ; they are not intended to bribe Mankind into Virtue ; but they are delightful Prospects which add to the Pleasures of those who are both good and happy in this Life ; and the Certainty thereof

thereof is the best Support to the virtuous Wretch in his Hours of Affliction here,

V. Man is proved, in the fifth Discourse, a free Agent; for, if he is not, neither Virtue nor Vice can be imputed to him.

VI. As a Consequence of the free Agency of Man, I demonstrate, in the sixth Discourse, the Origin of Evil to be the Abuse of Liberty; which is to be avoided by ceasing to cherish such Ideas as lead to Evil as soon as we discover the Tendency of those Ideas.

VII. I have fixed, in the seventh Discourse, what Ideas ought to be annexed to the Words *God*, *Providence*, and *Nature*; for without such settled Ideas our Enquiries are fruitless.

Now I have briefly taken a Review of the Heads of my former Demonstrations, which are entirely necessary to raise and preserve a just Reverence in us to the Deity, I shall prove, which is the chief End of all these Discourses, that *God* requires no more of us than *Nature* requires, or, in other Words, he that pays an Obedience to the Laws of *Nature* pays an Obedience to the Laws of *God*, and he that departs from the Laws of *Nature* departs from the Laws of *God*.

Philosophers have had their different favourite Names for their Criterion which they would have received. *Truth*, the *Fitness* or *Propriety of Things*, *Virtue*, and *Beauty*, have all been preferred, each as a Criterion, by which we should direct our Judgement: but (alas!) how vain, and confused, the Endeavours of those who would force a Distinction where no Difference can be found! What is *Truth* but the Existence of Things as they really are? And what is the *Fitness* or *Propriety of Things* but the Relation which one Thing bears to another consistent with *Truth*? And what is *Virtue* but that which arises from a Justness of Action, or a due Obedience payed to the Rule of Right, or to *Truth*? And what is *Beauty* but that which arises to the Mind in exact Proportions, in various Shapes, thro the Universe? *Happyness* has by some Sages been proposed as a Criterion; but that will appear to be only the Consequence of an Obedience payed to *Truth*, the *Fitness of Things*, *Virtue*, or *Beauty*. According to these Definitions are these Words used by me; all which center in one, which is *Truth*.

We need not search far into the Nature of Things before we find that Pleasure is eligible to all Men, and that Pain is odious and what we would all avoid. The certain Knowledge of Pleasure being desirable, and of Pain being hateful, constitutes Virtue or Vice in our Attempts to communicate one or the

the other. The Endeavour to communicate Pleasure constitutes Virtue ; and the Endeavour to communicate Pain constitutes Vice or moral Evil. If this is not an infallible Truth, Society is without a Cement, and all salutary Laws for the Preservation of our Lives and Propertys are without a Foundation. A Knowledge of the sure and mistaken Roads to Pleasure will arise from a strict Enquiry into the Rectitude and Beauty of Action ; which will, in a great Measure, appear hereafter in this Discourse.

Injustice to ourselves is the Foundation of our Injustice to other Persons : this will be indisputable if we nicely examine into an Abuse of our Liberty in some few Particulars ; one Instance of which I gave in my fifth Discourse, shewing some of the ill Consequences, to ourselves and other Persons, of an inordinate Pursuit of our Passions for Women : I chose that Instance, because, being taken from the too frequent Practices of Men, it is the more likely to affect the Reader ; and for the same Reason I shall now chuse another of as familiar a Kind. Drunkenness not only impairs the Health, but weakens the rational Facultys, and sometimes entirely destroys them ; and what is the fatal Consequence thereof ? We thereby weaken, and too often totally confound, those Facultys, the Support of which is the Support of Virtue, and the Ruin of which is

the Fall of Virtue, in us. Without any more particular Instances, every Man knows, either from Experience in himself, or Observation on other Men, that Abuses of the Powers of the Mind, such as Appetites irrationally indulged, and unbounded Passions, are naturally attended with corporeal Pain, and such a Perturbation of Mind as unhinges our Reason, and banishes all Sense of Virtue.

We have proceeded thus far with *Nature* only our Guide; and, if we carry our Enquiries farther, we shall soon find the same Voice of *Nature* to be the Voice of *God*; which will demonstrate these Crimes against ourselves to be Crimes against the Lord of the Universe. We find ourselves endowed with the Power of distinguishing Right from Wrong; and we likewise know that an Obedience payed to the Rectitude of Action promotes our own Interest and the Interest of Mankind; and we are also sure that if we destroy those Facultys by which we are able to distinguish Right from Wrong, and to pursue the Rectitude of Action, we root out the best Part of our Constitution, which God implanted in us as the Stamp of our Perfection, and the Cement of all Society. As we know that the right Use of our rational Powers brings us to the Knowledge of our Duty, and as we are sure that the Knowledge of our Duty was given to us to direct

rect our Practice thereby, we as certainly know that we are guilty of Ingratitude to God who gave it, and of Impiety against him, by destroying what he gave us as a sufficient Guide; and which he left to our own Choice whether we will follow it or not. God, by giving us the Power of seeing the Rectitude of Action, in Regard to ourselves, for I am not yet speaking of our Relation to other Persons, has given sufficient Indications of his Will towards us, viz. that we should use the Means for our Preservation; and when we have discovered his Will we must look on it as a Command; after such a Discovery is made, the Power is lodged in us of directing our Practice accordingly; and we act contrary to Truth and Beauty, when we disobey the Will of God in direct Opposition to the Conviction which resides in us. Thus we find the *Will of God* appearing from the *Nature* of Things; and thence arises the indispensable Duty of Man: this is true of our Duty to other Persons, as well as of that which more directly concerns ourselves abstracted from our Relation to other Men. The Arguments which I have here used, to prove that Violence to ourselves is a Crime against God, are not confined to the Instances which I have brought; for every Degree of voluntary Violence, from Suicide to the least Intemperance, may, by the same Criterion, be proved criminal, tho many Gradations
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come betwixt. Before I leave the Subject of our Duty to ourselves, I must distinguish between the real and mistaken Road to Pleasure. While we abuse our Facultys, we lose, what all Men seem in Pursuit of, substantial Happyness; and, while we catch, in the Abuse of our Facultys, a fleeting sensual Pleasure, we entail on ourselves, and often on our Posterity, Miserys from which there is no Refuge on this Side of the Grave.

We have now, by *Nature*, discovered our Duty to ourselves, abstracted from our Relation to other Persons; and from this Duty to ourselves, tho I have not gone thro every Branch thereof, we see Part of the Relation in which we stand to God, that is Part of our Duty to him; and by the same Clue, if we are careful not to lose our Hold, we shall discover our Duty to each other, and our farther Duty to God.

As I have observed, in my first Discourse, I perceive myself a Being susceptible of Pleasure and of Pain; I likewise perceive the Capacity of enjoying Pleasure, and feeling Pain, to arise from the Nature of my Constitution in Body and Mind, and from the Nature of the Objects about me, which are conveyed to my Consideration by my Senses, and by which my Mind is at sundry Times differently affected. I find myself endowed with the Power of reasoning; by which I mean a Power that enables me to distinguish
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betwixt Right and Wrong, a Power that enables me to judge of the Truth of such Things as are reduceable to the Measure of human Judgement, and which likewise enables me to distinguish those Things or Subjects which *are* reduceable to the Measure of human Judgement from those which *are not*. From this Knowledge of myself arises my certain Knowledge of the human Constitution, and of my Relation to each other Person; and, thus constituted, when I feel an Injury voluntarily committed on me by another Person, and unprovoked, I know that he has done to me that which he would not have had me to have done to him: and he having voluntarily inflicted the Injury on me is a Proof of his being certain that he has done that to me which he would not have had me to have done to him: and I likewise know that if I endeavour to hurt another in his Person or Property, I shall be looked upon as a dangerous and unworthy Member of human Society, and consequently, by my own ill Behaviour, render myself offensive, and my very Being insecure; on the contrary, if I abstain from Ill, and embrace every Opportunity that offers to ease the Miserys of other Persons, or to promote their Happyness, I thereby render myself beloved, and consequently more secure than by a different Behaviour: Abstinence therefore from Ill, and a Readyness to do well, are eligible,
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if considered only as Acts of Policy; for whatever is honest and just must be attended * with Profit. Thus, by the *Light* of *Nature*, we see that Acts of Benevolence, which I will not yet call Acts of Virtue, are preferable if considered only in a political Light. While I speak in the first Person, I utter the Voice of Reason which speaks in every Man, tho not always attended to.

Thus far I have considered Man in a political State; I will now view him in his moral Capacity; but this Work being so well performed in the Writings which are extant of those excellent Men some of the *Stoics*, and in those of *Tully* and *Clarke* †, the Retailers and Admirers of their Doctrines, tho not professed *Stoics* themselves, I shall be as short on this Head as the Subject will possibly permit me to be.

If Perfection is more eligible than Imperfection, if Beauty is more lovely than Deformity,

* Quod honestum idem justum; ex quo efficitur, ut quicquid honestum sit idem sit utile. *Cic. Off. L. 2. Honestum* has a stronger Meaning than the English Word *Honesty* in the common Acceptation of it: the *Latins* meant by it all that is laudable and beautiful in Action.

† Dr. *Clarke*, in his *Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of natural Religion*, is indebted, nor does he endeavour to conceal the Obligation, for many of his Arguments to *Tully* and the Writings of the *Stoics*; but, when he comes to speak of Revelation, he takes his Leave of those wise and good Men.

mity, Virtue is more eligible and lovely than Vice. A just Conformity of Action in every Man to the Rule of Right would expel Ambition, Tyranny, Murder, Theft, and the Train of Evils which attend them, from the Globe, and establish Concord on the Earth: and tho it seems morally impossible that the Hearts of all Men should unanimously tend, like so many mathematical Lines, to a Point, yet the Certainty of the Effect, if the Means are pursued, makes the Endeavour of one single Man against a bad World a Virtue: but I am asked, perhaps, in what does this Virtue consist? It consists in exerting all the Power that is in him to substitute Beauty for Deformity, and Perfection for Imperfection: if therefore, as I before said, Beauty is more lovely than Deformity, Perfection more eligible than Imperfection, Virtue, which contributes to the Establishment of Beauty and Perfection in the moral System, is more lovely and eligible than Vice which is the Blaster of Beauty, and the Destroyer of Perfection. This Method of Reasoning, which I owe to none but *Nature*, and which I endeavour to adapt to the common Capacitys of Mankind, will, I doubt not, be admitted as good Logic in the Schools: and for the Sake of the Majority of my Readers I will instance a Case of a familiar Kind. Let us suppose an Assembly of some hundreds of Men, in whom is lodged the legislative Power of a particular People;

People; and let us suppose the Majority to be corrupted Miscreants, servile Wretches, for the Wages of Improbability, to the Ambition, Avarice, or other Passions, of one Man; the Intent of which superior Villain is to enslave his Country, and aggrandise himself and Family. Let us lay down this given Supposition, and suppose, I say, any Nation in this unhappy Situation; and, to strengthen the Argument, let us suppose but one Man incorrupt; will it be less a Virtue in that worthy Man to use all the Means in his Power to frustrate the abominable Machinations of the Rest than if he had Numbers on his Side? No: he would be virtuous in using all the Means in his Power to substitute Beauty for Deformity, and Perfection for Imperfection; and Numbers added to his Side would only encrease the Number of good Men, and not add to, or take from, his Virtue. *Plato*, I think, has a Thought like this, but in what Part of his Works I have forgot, that the Wickedness of the World is such that it would almost force a Man to seek a safe Covert as from a Wreck, and become inactive, for his own Safety, in the Storm or Wreck of the World. The *Stoics* had always too great a Sense of Virtue to teach, or even insinuate, such an indolent Doctrine: certain it is, as I have sayed before, that, if Beauty is more lovely than Deformity, and Perfection more eligible than Imperfection, whatever is the

Support of Beauty and Perfection must be more lovely than what is destructive of them; and an * Abstinence in any one Man from using the Means in his Power of promoting Beauty and Perfection is a Neglect of his moral Duty; for if it is allowed that Beauty is more lovely than Deformity, and Perfection more eligible than Imperfection, whatever promotes Beauty and Perfection must likewise be allowed more lovely and eligible than what destroys them; and what promotes them I call Virtue, and what destroys them I call Vice; and he that neglects the Means which tend to the Promotion of Beauty and Perfection must likewise be allowed to neglect what in itself is lovely and eligible. Till Beauty and Perfection are proved odious, and Deformity and Imperfection lovely and eligible, these Arguments will remain valid; and this would be everlasting Reason, even supposing there was † *a fatherless World, and a forlorn Nature*. Let us leave a Deity out of the Question, and Beauty still will be Beauty and Perfection Perfection, and whatever promotes them proportionably lovely.

Thus far I have considered Man in his political and moral Capacity, as he stands related to the Rest of Mankind, abstracted from
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* A weak Writer, one of the apostolic Fathers; has well sayed, amidst an Heap of Rubbish, *si abstinueris a Bono, et id non feceris, peccabis. Hermas in mandat.*

† The Earl of Shaftesbury's Words.

his Relation to God ; and hitherto *Nature* alone assures me that Virtue is preferable to Vice. I will next consider him in his religious Capacity, as he stands related to the Deity; and here I require no other Guide than the same Clue which I before received from the Hand of *Nature*. As I treat of his Relation to God, his Duty to Mankind and to himself will farther appear.

We find by *Nature* that *God* has made one general Revelation to Mankind ; that is, he has originally implanted in us, as Part of our Constitution, the Power of judging of the Propriety and Impropriety of Action, and of the Reverence due to himself. This Power of judging is from the Appearances of Things; and if we should credit any pretended Revelation of God's Will, without the Means of judging from Appearances, we must sacrifice the first wise and unerring Revelation to a false one.

As I have, in my two first Discourses, demonstrated the Being and Attributes of God, and I believe in a new and certain Manner, I need here only refer the Reader to them, and proceed to shew that the *Will of God*, which is discoverable by the *Light of Nature*, should be regarded as a Command. Truly and judiciously has Dr. *Clarke* * observed that *the same Beauty, the same Excellence, the same Weight*

* In his *Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of natural Religion*. Prop. 2.

Weight and Importance of the Rules of everlasting Righteousness, with Regard to which God is always pleased to make those Rules the Measure of his own Actions, prove it impossible but he must likewise will and desire that all rational Creatures should proportionably make them the Measure of theirs. As our Idea of God is that of an allwise, omnipotent, and perfect, Being, all his Works, which are the Fruits of infinite Wisdom and Omnipotence, must likewise be perfect; and as he has given us the Power, as Part of our Constitution, to see the Rectitude of Action, to distinguish Beauty from Deformity, and as he has likewise left us free to direct our Practice thereby, he has signified to us his Will that we should govern our Actions by that Rule of Right which leads to Beauty and Perfection; and he has, by the Liberty granted to us, placed the Virtue in ourselves of pursuing that Rule of Right; and the *Will of God*, which is discoverable by the *Light of Nature*, should have the same Obedience payed to it as if it was a verbal Command from the Voice of the Almighty: and whatever weak and idle Distinctions have been made by some eminent Churchmen betwixt positive and moral Dutys, no Dutys ought to be positive but what are moral, and all moral Dutys are positive Dutys.

The Deductions which are to be made from the Laws of *Nature* are various, as are

our Relations to one another thro the World; however, as many are stinted in their Principles of Morality, I shall make some Observations on universal Benevolence, which is requisite to constitute a virtuous Character; and, in this Enquiry into universal Benevolence, I shall make the proper Distinction betwixt the benevolent Man and the Selflover. Many have centered all Virtue in Selflove, some with a Design to confound Virtue and Vice, and some only from an Ignorance of the Use of Words. An Obedience payed to the Rule of Right certainly advances our own Happyness; and we can not justly be sayed to act consistent with our own Good if we depart from the Rule of Right: notwithstanding which, Benevolence and Selflove have as different Ideas annexed to them, in their proper Meanings, as are to Black and White. We must distinguish betwixt the benevolent Man and the Selflover thus: the benevolent Man seeks not Pleasure at the Expence of another's Happyness, but, on the contrary, would deny himself a momentary sensual Pleasure to extricate another from Misery; he would not only deny himself a Pleasure, but he would undergo some Trouble, to make another happy. The Degrees of Trouble which a benevolent Man would undergo to serve other Persons, and the Degrees of Pleasure of which he would abridge himself, we have no Occasion here to en-

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quire into. The Selflover is a Character directly repugnant to this; he is for grasping Pleasure, without regarding the Sufferings of another for what he enjoys; he centers all Happyness in himself; he is neither pleased nor displeased with the Felicity of another; he does not so much as give himself a Thought about it; nor has he a fellow Feeling in the Pains of other Men; he views them with the same Indifference with which he does their Pleasure; he is affected by neither the one nor the other. This is the just Distinction betwixt the benevolent Man and the Selflover, betwixt the good and bad Man: one acts according to the moral Propriety of Nature, consulting the Relation in which he stands to the Society of which he is a Member, and to the general Society of Mankind: the other makes himself the *only* Object of Love to himself. The good and wise Man who denies himself Pleasure, and suffers Pain, to render himself serviceable to Mankind, can not come under the Denomination of a Selflover; because he is more pleased with his Selfdenyal, while he pursues the Rule of Right, than in gratifying his Appetites and at the same Time departing from the Rule of Right: his Pleasure arises from acting according to the moral Rectitude of Things, and obeying at the same Time the *Will* of God which he discovers by the *Light* of Nature. I want not to be informed that he who makes the Rule of

Right his Rule of Conduct acts consistent with his Love to himself; but, notwithstanding the Cavils of weak and wicked Men, the benevolent Man and the Selflover have the same Difference in the Meaning of the Words as is in the two Words *Friend* and *Enemy*: one has a Regard to the Happyness of all Mankind, the other to his own only. In this Sense *Cicero*, who entered as deep into moral Obligations as any Man, speaks of universal Benevolence: *they*, says he *, *who deny that Rectitude of Action to the whole World, which they allow to be due to their own Country, overthrow the general Society of human Kind; with the Abolition of which, Beneficence, Liberality, Goodness, and Justice, are rooted out; the Destroyers of which are guilty of Impiety against God*: and this Reasoning *Dr. Clarke* † judiciously uses tho in other Words; and, as that great Divine observes in the same Proposition, speaking of the Law of Reason, *this is that Law of Nature, which, being founded on the eternal Reason of Things, is as absolutely unalterable as natural Good and Evil, as mathematical or arithmetical Truths.* To this universal

* Qui autem Civium Rationem dicunt habendam, externorum negant, hi dirimunt communem humani Generis Societatem; quâ sublatâ, Beneficentia, Liberalitas, Bonitas, Justitia funditus tollitur; quæ qui tollunt, etiam adversus Deos immortales impii judicandi sunt. *Off. Lib. 3.*

† In his *Discourse concerning the unchangeable Obligations of natural Religion.* Prop. I.

fal Law of *Reason* and of *Nature*, which is the Law of *God*, all moral Propositions are reduced.

I have now demonstrated that all the Knowledge which can possibly be had of our Relation to *God*, to Mankind, and to ourselves, is discoverable by the original Revelation which *God* has implanted in our Constitution, that is the Power of distinguishing Right from Wrong; and therein I have proved that *God* requires no more of us than *Nature* requires. Let us ask ourselves what *God* requires of us? The reasonable answer will be, that he requires our Obedience to his Will, by making the Rule of Right our Rule of Action; and *Nature*, by which we discover the Will of *God*, requires the same: so *God* requires no more of us than *Nature* requires. Virtue and Vice consist in paying Obedience to, or departing from, what we know to be the Rule of Right, which is the same as obeying or disobeying the Will of *God*; and every Man, who is not a mad Man or an Ideot, knows the Rule of Right, and knowing it knows the Pursuit of it to be his Duty, tho one Man can refine on it more than another; and every Man is free to chuse whether he will pursue it or not.

Now I have shewed that *God* requires no more of us than *Nature* requires, I proceed to shew more largely that he that departs from the Laws of *Nature* disobeys the Will

of God: whoever believes any Reports, delivered under a religious Pretence, repugnant to the known Laws of *Nature*, disobeys the Will of God, by sacrificing the original Revelation which God implanted in him to an Imposture; and whatever is related as coming from God, for which are no Phenomena in Nature leading to a Demonstration, should be rejected as false and impious, as an Imposture, demanding our Assent, repugnant to the Laws of *Nature*, and in Disobedience to the Will of God.

Dr. Clarke understood the *Stoics*, he saw their Beautys, and judiciously transplanted them into his own Writings; but, as I before observed in a Note, when he comes to speak of Revelation, he takes his Leave of those wise and good Men. As this eminent Man is justly ranked in the first Class of learned Divines, a Confutation of what he has advanced against the Evidence and Authority of the *Stoics* and other ethic Writers, and for the Necessity of Revelation, may be looked upon as an Answer to all the Advocates for the latter, since most are acknowledged to be inferior, and none allowed to be superior, to him. He says * that *their Doctrine*, (the Doctrine of the *Stoics*, &c.) in great Measure, dyed with them, not having any sufficient Evidence or Authority to support it. The Reader must take Notice that this

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is only an Affirmation ; in Answer to which I affirm that the *Stoics* had the best Evidence, and the greatest Authority, for their Doctrine, which could be had ; they had *Truth*, the *Fitness of Things*, *Virtue*, and *Beauty*, on their Side : the happy Consequences of a virtuous Life, and the miserable Effects of Vice, were Evidences for them, the strongest Evidences which could be had or were required ; and these are eternal Evidences, such as will not suffer their Doctrines, their moral Doctrines, to dy, unless an Age of impenetrable Stupidity, thro the World, should suffer them to perish, or unless Superstition, which is more dangerous, should destroy them, as it already has many valuable Pieces. A Miracle wrought by *Zeno*, *Epictetus*, or *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, would not have made their Doctrines truer than they are without a Miracle. They could easily, had they an Inclination, have came with a Falsehood in their Lips, and sayed that God appeared to them, and dictated the Words which they wrote ; but they were too wise and too good to endeavour to corroborate their Doctrines with a Ly ; they appealed to the natural Facultys of the Mind, well knowing that sound Reason and Virtue required no dishonest Aids. What have those Persons done who have pretended immediate Revelation, and reported Miracles of other Men ? Instead of laying down a fine rational System of Religion, they have confusedly
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heaped together several surprising and inconsistent Tales in the historical Part of their Writings; and their Doctrines consist of Scraps and Sayings, which have little more Connection with each other than the common Adagia of an Age have with one another.

Dr. *Clarke* says * that the antient moral Philosophers, tho they knew the Propriety of Virtue, were ignorant of the Manner in which God would be worshiped, and what Satisfaction he required for Sins, which could not be known by the Light of Nature. Those Philosophers knew the Propriety and Beauty of Virtue; they knew the Necessity of an Adoration, and grateful Acknowledgement of Favours, to *God*; and this Knowledge the *Light of Nature* dictated to them; and if any Man, under a Pretence to Revelation, should injoin the Necessity of a trumpery Heap of Ceremonys, and of a Belief in certain Articles, which have no Connection with Reason, and consequently do not concern rational Creatures, Reason teaches us to pity the mistaken Wretches who suffer themselves to be deluded, and at the same Time to smile at their ridiculous Follys.

The same learned Divine insists † on the Truth of Revelation from the Want of it to reform Mankind. This Argument I have thoroughly answered in the preceding Part of this Discourse; in which I have shewed the Sufficiency

* Prop. 6.

† Prop. 7.

ciency of human Reason to bring us to Beauty and Perfection of Action: and supposing we grant the Want of it, are Men less adulterous, less prone to lying, thieving, and murdering, than before? No. Moreover, the Argument for Revelation, founded on the Want of it, serves *Mabomet* as much as it does any other Author of a new Religion.

His Argument for the Christian * Dispensation, from the Excellence of the Doctrine, is no Argument for the extraordinary divine Authority thereof, even supposing the Doctrine as excellent as he says it is: if the Doctrines of Morality therein contained are such as human Reason is capable of furnishing us with, where is the Necessity for Revelation? And if they are such as Reason can not comprehend, they do not, as I sayed before, concern rational Creatures.

I shall here examine into but one more Passage of the Writings of this learned Divine; which contains a Doctrine that appears to me as repugnant to the Attributes of God as possibly any Doctrine can be; and I appeal to the Lord of all Worlds, the great Searcher of all Hearts, as a Witness of the Truth, when I declare that the most zealous Veneration for his Character makes me shudder at the Prophaneness of the abominable and impious Doctrine into which I am now entering on a short Enquiry. Dr. *Clarke's*
Words

* Prop. 10.

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Words are these: * *that the Prayers of sinful and depraved Creatures, sincerely repenting, should be offered up to God, and become prevalent with him, thro and by the Intercession of a Mediator, is very consonant to right and unprejudiced Reason.* How consonant this Doctrine is to *right and unprejudiced Reason* will appear from an impartial Examination into the Ideas which we must necessarily annex to a Mediator, and to the Being to whom Mediation is made. The Idea which we must annex to a Mediator is that of a Being making Intercession to another Being for a third Being or Number of Beings. The Idea which we must annex to the Being to whom Intercession is made is that of a Being who wants both Intelligence and Advice. If God is infinitely knowing, as he really is, what Necessity for a Mediator to inform him of any Thing? If he is infinitely wise, as he really is, what Necessity for a Mediator to admonish him how to act? Moreover, if he is infinitely good, as he really is, what Necessity for a Mediator to intreat for Mercy? Let us next enquire after the Mediator, who is he? Did God create a Mediator to intercede to himself, from a Consciousness of his own Defects? Or did a Mediator spring into Life and Immortality by his own Power, to intercede to God? Impious Doctrine! And derogatory from every Attribute of the Deity!

God

* Prop. 10.

by the LIGHT *of* NATURE. 171

God knows our Wants without a Mediator to inform him, and has Wisdom sufficient to judge of what is fit, thro the unbounded Universe, without a Mediator to advise him, and has Goodness to act according to the everlasting Rule of Righteousness, without a Mediator to intreat him: the only Mediator therefore is an upright Heart, and the Consciousness of a well spent Life.

The E N D.

By the Light of Nature. 171

God knows our Ways without a Mediator to
inform him, and has Wisdom sufficient to
judge of what is fit, thro' the unbounded
Universe, without a Mediator to advise him,
and has Goodness to act according to the ever-
lasting Rule of Righteousness, without a Me-
diator to instruct him: the only Mediator
therefore is an upright Heart, and the Con-
sciousness of a well spent Life.

THE END.